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ATOLLS OF THE SUN

BY

FREDERICK O'BRIEN

Author of "Mystic Isles of the South Seas," "White Shadows in the South Seas," etc.

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FOREWORD

"Atolls of the Sun" is a book of experiences, impressions, and dreams in the strange and lonely islands of the South Seas. It does not aim to be literal, or sequential, though everything in it is the result of my wanderings in the far and mysterious recesses of the Pacific Ocean.

I am not a scientist or scholar, and can relate only what I saw and heard, felt and imagined, in my dwelling with savage and singular races among the wonderful lagoons of the coral atolls, and poignant valleys of disregarded islands.

If I can make my reader see and feel the sad and beautiful guises of life in them, and the secrets of a few unusual souls, I shall be satisfied. The thrills of adventure upon the sea and in the shadowy glens, the odors of rare and sweet flowers, the memories of lovable humans, are here written to keep them alive in my heart, and to share them with my friends.

Life is not real. It is an illusion, a screen upon which each one writes the reactions upon himself of his sensory knowledge. The individual is the moving camera, and what he calls life is his projection of the panorama about him—not more actual than the figures and storms upon the cinema screen. In this book I have put the film that passed through my mind in wild places, and among natural people.

FOREWORD

It is useless to look to find in the South Seas what I have found. It is there, glowing and true, and yet, as each beholder conjures a different vision of the human spectacle about him, each can see the islands of romance only by the lens life has fitted upon his soul.

To seek a replica of experience or scenes is to spoil a possession.

If this book has interest, one may read and laugh, be entertained or repelled with thanks that one can sit at ease, and watch this picture made on another's mind in long journeys and in many days and nights of hazard and delight.

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ATOLLS OF THE SUN

CHAPTER I

Leaving Tahiti—The sunset over Moorea—Bound for the Paumotu Atolls—The Schooner *Marara, Flying Fish*—Captain Jean Moet and others aboard—Sighting and Landing on Niau.

"*NOUS partons!* We air off—off!" shouted *Capitaine* Moet, gaily, as the *Marara,* the schooner *Flying Fish,* slipped through the narrow, treacherous pass of the barrier reef of Papeete Harbor. "*Mon ami,* you weel by 'n' by say dam Moet for take you to ze *Iles Dangereuses.* You air goin' to ze worse climate in ze *sacré mundo.* Eet ees hot and ze win' blow many time like 'urricane. An' you nevaire wash, because ze wataire ees salt *como* se o-c-ean."

We had waited for a wafting breeze all afternoon, the brown crew alert to raise the anchor at every zephyr, but it was almost dark when we were clear of the reef and, with all sails raised, fair on our voyage to the mysterious atolls of the Paumotu Archipelago. Often I had planned that pilgrimage in my long stay in Tahiti. At the Cercle Bougainville, the business club, where the pearl and shell traders and the copra buyers drank their rum and Doctor Funks, I had heard many stories of a nature in these Paumotus strangely different of aspect from all other parts of the world, of

a native people who had amazing knowledge of the secrets of the sea and its inhabitants, and of white dwellers altered by residence there to a pattern very contrary from other whites. For scores of years these traders and sailors or their forerunners had played all the tricks of commerce on the Paumotuans, and they laughed reminiscently over them; yet they hinted of demons there, of ghosts that soared and whistled, and of dancers they had seen transfixed in the air. What was true or untrue I had not known; nor had they, I believed.

Llewellyn, the Welsh-Tahitian gentleman, after four or five glasses of *Pernoud,* would ask, "Do you know why the Paumotus are unearthly?" and would answer in the same liquorish breath, "Because they have n't any earth about them. They 're all white bones."

Woronick, the Parisian expert in pearls, referred often to the wonderful jewel he had bought in Takaroa from a Paumotuan, and the fortune he had made on it.

"That pearl was made by God and fish and man, and how it was grown and Tepeva a Tepeva got it, is a something to learn; unique. It is bizarre, *effrayant.* I will not recite it here, for you must go to Takaroa to hear it."

And Lying Bill and McHenry, in a score of vivid phrases, told of the cyclones that had swept entire populations into the sea, felled the trees of scores of years' growth, and left the bare atoll as when first it emerged from the depths.

"I knew a Dane who rode over Anaa on a tree like a

bloody 'orse on the turf," said Lying Bill to me, with a frightening bang of his tumbler on the table." 'E was caught by the top of a big wave, an' away 'e drove from one side of the bleedin' island to the other, and come right side up. A bit 'urt in the 'ead, 'e was, but able to take 'is bloomin' oath on what 'appened."

I had not depended on these *raconteurs* for a vicarious understanding of the Paumotus; for I had read and noted all that I could find in books and calendars about them, but yet I had felt that these unlettered actors in the real dramas laid there gave me a valid picture. My hopes were fixed in finding in spirit what they saw only materially.

Moet stood by the wheel until we cleared the waters where the lofty bulk of the island confused the winds, and I, when the actions of the sailors in shifting the sails with his repeated orders had lost newness, looked with some anguish at that sweet land I was leaving. It had meant so much to me.

A poetic mood only could paint the swiftly changing panorama as the schooner on its seaward tacks moved slowly under the faint vesper breeze; the mood of a diarist could tell how "the sun setting behind Moorea in a brilliant saffron sky, splashed with small golden and mauve-colored clouds, threw boldly forward in a clear-cut, opaque purple mass that fantastically pinnacled island, near the summit of whose highest peak there glittered, star-like, a speck of light—the sky seen through a hole pierced in the mountain. How in the sea, smooth as a mirror, within the reef, and here and there to seaward, blue ruffled by a catspaw, away to the horizon was reflected the saffron hue from above; how

against purple Moorea a cocoa-crowned islet in the harbor appeared olive-green—a gem set in the yellow water. How the sunlight left the vivid green shore of palm-fringed Tahiti, and stole upward till only the highest ridges and precipices were illuminated with strange pink and violet tints springing straight from the mysterious depth of dark-blue shadow. How from the loftiest crags there floated a long streamer cloud—the cloud-banner of Tyndal. Then, as the sun sank lower and lower, the saffron of the sky paled to the turquoise-blue of a brief tropical twilight, the cloud-banner melted and vanished, and the whole color deepened and went out in the sudden darkness of the night."

If one must say farewell to Tahiti, let it be in the evening, in the tender hues of the sunset, the effacing shadows of the sinking orb in sympathy with the day's tasks done; the screen of night being drawn amid flaming, dying lights across a workaday world, the dream pictures of the Supreme Artist appearing and fainting in the purpling heavens. I was leaving people and scenes that had taught me a new path in life, or, at least, had hung lamps to guide my feet in an appreciation of values before unknown to me.

I came back to the deck of the schooner with Moet's call for a steersman, and his invitation to go below for food and drink. I refused despite his "*Sapristi!* Eef you no eat by 'n' by you cannot drink!" and when he disappeared down the companion-ladder I climbed to the roof of the low cabin. The moon was now high—a plate of glowing gold in an indigo ceiling. The swelling sea rocked the vessel and now and then lifted her sharp prow out of the water and struck it a blow of

friendship as it rejoined it. I unrolled a straw mat, and, placing it well aft so that the jibing boom would not touch me, lay upon my back, and visioned the prodigious world I was seeking. The very names given by discoverers were suggestive of extravagant adventure. The Half-drowned Islands, the Low Archipelago, the Dangerous Isles, the Pernicious Islands, were the titles of the early mariners. For three hundred years the Paumotus had been dimly known on the charts as set in the most perilous sea in all the round of the globe. I had read that they were more hazardous than any other shores, as they were more singular in form. They had excited the wonder of learned men and laymen by even the scant depiction of their astounding appearance. For decades after the eyes of a European glimpsed them they were thought by many bookish men to be as fabulous as Atlantis or Micomicon; too chimerical to exist, though witches then were a surety, and hell a burning reality.

I fell asleep, and as during the night the wind shifted and with it the schooner veered, I had but a precarious hold upon the mat and was several times stood on my feet in the narrow passageway. The dream *jinn* seized these shiftings and twistings, the shouts of the mate in charge, the chants of the sailors at work, the whistle of the wind through the cordage, and wove them into fantasies,—ecstasies or nightmares,—and thus warded off my waking.

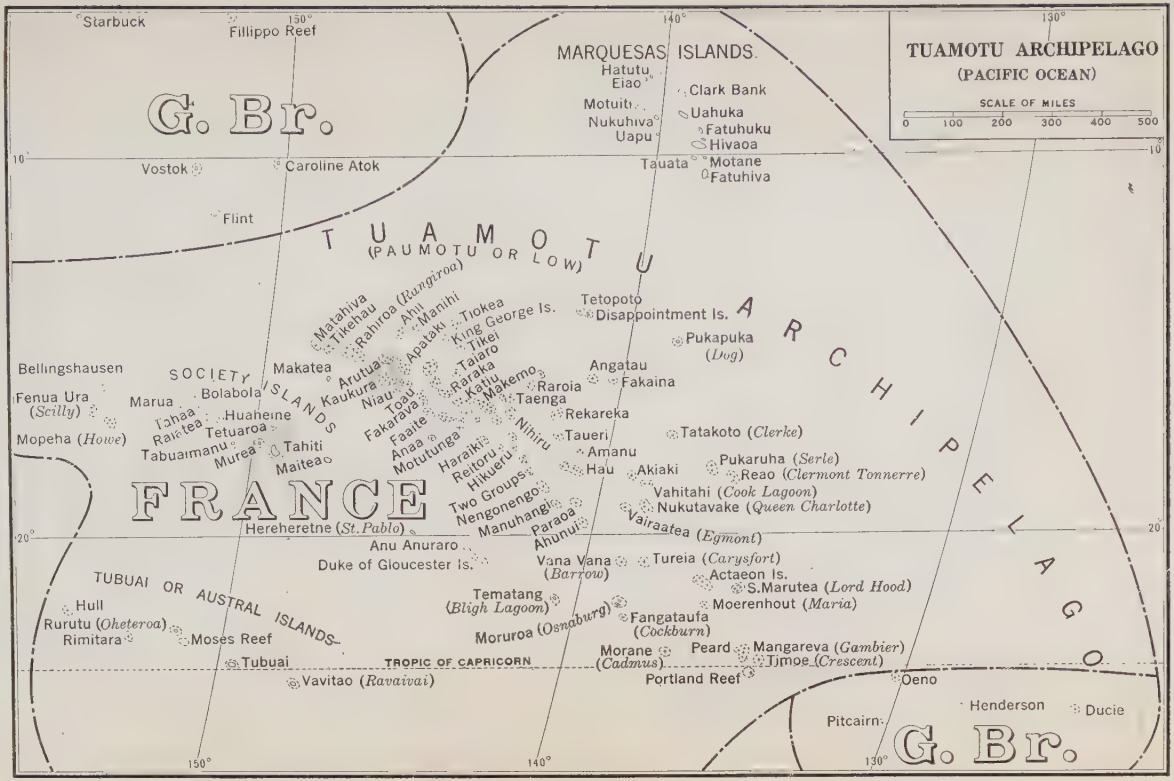
But the sun, roused from his slumber beneath the dip of the sphere, could be put off with no fine frenzies. When even half above the dipping horizon his beams opened my eyes as if a furnace door had been flung

wide, and I turned over to see my hard couch occupied by others. Beside me was McHenry, next to him Moet, and furthest, the one white woman aboard, the captain's wife. We yawned in unison; and, with a quick, accustomed movement, she dropped below. The day had begun on the schooner.

The *Marara* was once a French gunboat of these seas when cannons were needed to prevent dishonor to the tricolor by failure to obey French discipline, while France was making good colonists or corpses of all peoples hereabout. She was the very pattern of the rakish craft in which the blackbirders and pirates sailed this ocean for generations—built for speed, for entering threatening passes, for stealing silently away under giant sweeps, and for handling by a small number of strong and fearless men. The bitts on the poop were still marked by the gun emplacements, and the rail about the stern was but two feet high.

Now her owners were a company of Tahiti Europeans who, trusting largely to the seamanship and business shrewdness of her master, despatched her every few weeks or months on voyages about the French islands within a thousand miles or so to sell the natives all they would buy, and to get from them at the least cost the copra, shells, and pearls which were virtually the sole products of these islands.

The cabin was one room, stuffy and hot, and malodorous of decades of cargo. A small table in the center for dining was alone free from shelves and boxes holding merchandise, which was displayed as in a country store. Besides all kinds of articles salable to a primitive people, there were foods in barrels, boxes,


TUAMOTU ARCHIPELAGO
(PACIFIC OCEAN)
SCALE OF MILES
0 100 200 300 400 500
MARQUESAS ISLANDS
G. Br.
FRANCE
G. Br.
TUAMOTU ARCHIPELAGO
(PAUMOTU OR LOW)
SOCIETY ISLANDS
TUBUAI OR AUSTRAL ISLANDS
TROPIC OF CAPRICORN
Starbuck
Fillippo Reef
Vostok
Caroline Atok
Flint
Hatutu
Eiao
Motuiti
Nukuhiva
Uapu
Clark Bank
Uahuka
Fatuhuku
Hivaoa
Tauata
Motane
Fatuhiva
Matahiva
Tikehau
Rahiroa (Rangiroa)
Ahii
Manihi
Apataki
King George Is.
Tiokea
Tikei
Taiaro
Raraka
Kauu
Makemo
Raroia
Taenga
Tetopoto
Disappointment Is.
Pukapuka (Dog)
Angatau
Fakaina
Rekareka
Taueri
Tatakoto (Clerke)
Amanu
Hau
Akiaki
Pukaruha (Serle)
Reao (Clermont Tonnerre)
Vahitahi (Cook Lagoon)
Nukutavake (Queen Charlotte)
Vairaatea (Egmont)
Tureia (Carysfort)
Actaeon Is.
S.Marutea (Lord Hood)
Moerenhout (Maria)
Mangareva (Gambier)
Tjmoe (Crescent)
Oeno
Henderson
Ducie
Pitcairn
Portland Reef
Morane (Cadmus)
Peard
Fangataufa (Cockburn)
Tematang (Bligh Lagoon)
Moruroa (Osnaburg)
Vana Vana (Barrow)
Duke of Gloucester Is.
Anu Anuraro
Hereheretne (St. Pablo)
Nihiru
Haraiki
Reitoru
Hikueru
Two Groups
Nengonengo
Manuhangi
Paraoa
Ahunui
Anaa
Motutunga
Faaite
Fakarava
Toau
Niau
Arutua
Kaukura
Bellingshausen
Fenua Ura (Scilly)
Mopeha (Howe)
Marua
Bolabola
Tahaa
Raiatea
Huaheine
Tetuaroa
Tabuaimanu
Murea
Tahiti
Maitea
Makatea
Hull
Rurutu (Oheteroa)
Rimitara
Moses Reef
Tubuai
Vavitao (Ravaivai)
10°
20°
130°
140°
150°

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tins, and glass, for whites and for educated native palates.

Jean Moet, the commander of the *Marara,* was of the type of French sailor encountered in the Mediterranean, and especially about Marseilles and Spanish ports. He had a slight person, with hair and moustache black as the stones of Papenoo beach—nervous, excitable, moving incessantly, gesturing with every word. Twenty-eight of his forty years had been passed in ships. He had visited the *Ile du Diable,* and had seen Dreyfus there; he chattered of New York, Senegal, Yokohama, Cayenne, was full of French ocean oaths, breaking into English or Spanish to enlighten me or press a point, singing a Parisian music-hall *chansonette,* or a Spanish *cancioncita.* His language was a curious hodge-podge bespeaking the wanderings of the man and his intensely mercurial temperament.

His wife, who sailed with him on all voyages since their marriage five years before, was his opposite—large-boned and heavy, like a Millet peasant, looking at her brilliant husband as a wistful cow at her master, but not fearing to caution him against extravagance in stimulant or money. Her life had begun in Tahiti, and she had always been there until the dashing son of the *Midi* had lifted her from the house of her father—a petty official—to the deck of the *Flying Fish.* She was a housekeeper and accountant.

She paid especial attention to the shelves of pain-killers, cough cures, perunas, bitters and medical discoveries from America, which, in islands where all alcoholic liquors were forbidden to the aborigines, sold readily to all who sickened for them. Moet was affec-

tionate but stern toward Virginie, the wife, and talked to her as does a kind but wise master to a trained seal.

For breakfast, the captain, Madame Moet, McHenry, and I had canned sardines, canned hash from Chicago, California olives, canned pineapple from Hawaii, and red wine from Bordeaux.

Virginie explained in Tahitian French that Jean had forgotten to get aboard stores of fresh food. He had been at the Cercle Bougainville until we had gone aboard, she said caustically. Jean put his arm about her fat waist.

"*Mais,* dar-leeng," he said, soothingly, "*tais-toi!*" And then to me, "We are *camarades, ma femme y mi, compañeros buenos.* Ma wife she wash ze *linge.* That good, eh? *Amerique* ze woman got boss hand now. *Diable! C'est* rottan! *Hombre,* ze wife ees for ze *cuisine,* and ze babee."

He pressed her middle, and advised her to clear up the table while we went on deck for a smoke.

He became confidential with me after a *pousse café* or two.

"We *faire* ze *chose économique,* Virginie *y mi,*" he said. "Maybee som' day we weesh *avoir* leetle farm *en France. En vérité, mon ami,* I forget ze vegetable an' ze meat because I beat McHenry at *écarté* in ze Cercle Bougainville, jus' *avant* we go 'way from Papeete. I nevaire play ze *carte* on ze schoonaire! *Jamais de la vie!*"

The captain had aboard a brown pup, a mongrel he had found in the Marquesas Islands. He had named him Chocolat, and passed hours each day in teaching him tricks—to lie down and sit up at command, to

stand and to bark. The dog liked to run over the roof of the cabin and to crouch upon the low rail at the stern. As any roll or pitch of the vessel might toss him into the ocean, I feared for his longevity, but Chocolat—pronounced by Moet "Shockolah"—was able to fall inboard whenever the motion jeopardized his safety.

"Eh, petit chien," Jean Moet would cry, when Chocolat skated down the inclined deck into the scuppers, or hung for a moment indecisively on the rail, "you by 'n' by goin'-a be eat by ze *requin.* Ze big shark getta you, *perrillo,* an' you forget all my teach you, *mi querido!*"

He whipped Chocolat many times a day, when the puppy let down from "attention" before told, or when he attacked his food before a certain whistled note.

"What will you do with him when his education is complete?" I asked Moet.

"When he ees educate, *hein?* He will be like ze saircuss animal. One year old, maybe, he make turnover, fight ze *boxe,* drink wine, an', *puedeser,* he talk leetle. Zen I sell heem some tourist, some crazee *Americain* who zink he do for heem like me. I sharge five hunder franc."

McHenry, who kicked Chocolat whenever he had an opportunity unseen, ridiculed Moet's dream of gain.

"You will like hell!" said McHenry. "When you 've got the dirty little bastard sayin', 'Good mornin',' nice an' proper, he 'll sneak ashore in some boat-load o' truck, an' some Paumotuan 'll hotpot him. Wait till he 's fat! You know what they 'll do for fresh meat."

"Non, non!" answered the captain, angrily. "I am

not afraid of zat. I teach heem I keel heem he go in boat, but maybe you take heem an' sell heem on ze quiet, McHenry."

The small, cold eyes of McHenry gleamed, and a queer smile twisted his mouth.

"Well, keep him from under my feet!" he warned, and laughed at some thought now fully formed in his mind. I could see it squirming in his small brain.

McHenry was as rollicking a rascal as I knew in all the South Seas. He was bitter and yet had a flavor of real humor at odd times. Without schooling except that of a wharf-rat in Liverpool, New York, and San Francisco, he had come into these latitudes twenty years before. Cunning yet drunken, cruel but now and again doing a kindness out of sheer animal spirits or a desire to show off, he had many enemies, and yet he had a few friends. When the itching for money or the desire to feel power over those about him urged him, as most of the time, he proved himself the ripest and rottenest product of his early and present environment. He had had desperate fights to keep from being a decaying beachcomber, a parasite without the law; but a certain Scotch caution, a love of making and amassing profits, and, as I learned later, a firm and towering native wife, had kept him at least out of jail and in the groove of trading.

Boasting was his chief weakness. He would go far to find the chance to ease his latent sense of inferiority to an audience that did not know fully his poverty of character and attainment. After years of ups and downs he had now quarreled with his recent employers, and was going to pitch his trade tent on some Paumotu atoll where copra and pearl-shell might be found. He

thought that he might stay a while in Takaroa, one of our ports, because the diving season was about to open there. He and I being the only ones whose language was English, we were much together, but I always half despised myself for not speaking my mind to him. Still, those lonely places make a man compromise as much as do cities. What one might fear most would be having no one to talk with.

We lived on deck, all four of us, the Moets, McHenry, and I, along with a half-caste mate, sleeping always on the roof of the cabin, and taking our meals off it, except in rain. In that moist case we bundled on the floor of the cabin. There was no ceremony. The cook brought the food through the cabin, and we handed up and down the dishes through the after scuttle, helping ourselves at will to the wine and rum which were in clay bottles on the roof. McHenry and I were the only passengers, and the crew of six Tahitians was ample for all tasks. They were Piri a Tuahine, the boat-steerer; Peretia a Huitofa, Moe a Nahe, Roometua a Terehe, Piha a Teina, and Huahine, with Tamataura, the cook.

The whole forward deck of the schooner was crowded with native men, women, and children, the families of church leaders who were returning to their Paumotu homes after attending a religious festival in Tahiti. They lay huddled at night, sleeping silently in the moonlight and under the stars. All day, and until eight or nine o'clock, they conversed and ate, and worked with their hands, plaiting hats of *pandanus,* sugar-cane, bamboo, and other materials. White laborers massed in such discomfort would have quarreled, squabbled for place, and eased their annoyance in loud words, but the

Polynesian, of all races, loves his fellow and keeps his temper.

These were the first Paumotuan people I had seen intimately, and I listened to them and asked them questions. A deacon who at night removed a black coat and slept in a white-flowered blue loin-cloth, the *pareu* of all the Polynesians, gazed at the heavens for hours. He knew many of the stars.

"Our old people," he said, "believed that the gods were always making new worlds in distant sky places beyond the Milky Way, the *Maoroaheita.* When a new world was made by the strong hands of the gods, the *Atua,* it went like a great bird to the place fixed for it. That star, *Rehua,"*—he pointed toward Sirius,—"was first placed by the *Atua* near the *Tauha,* the Southern Cross, but afterwards they changed it, and sent it to where it is now."

I looked at the glowing cross, and remembered the emotion its first sight had stirred in me. I was tossing on the royal yard of a bark bound for Brazil, up a hundred feet and more from deck, when, raising my head from the sail I had made fast, there burst upon me the wonderful form and brilliance of the constellation which five thousand years ago entranced the Old World but which is hidden from it now.

The deacon again raised his hand and indicated the spot where *Rehua* had shone before the divine mind had changed. It was the Coal-sack, the black vacancy in the Magellan Clouds, so conspicuous below the cross when all the rest of the sky is cloudless and clear. The Maori mind had wisely settled upon that vast space in the stellar system in which not even an atom of stellar

dust sheds a single flicker of luminosity as the point from which the gods had plucked *Rehua.* I had no such lucid reason for this amazing, celestial void as the half-naked deacon on the deck of the *Marara.*

We had a poor wind for two days, and I looked long hours in the water, so close to the deck, at the manifestations of organic and vegetable vitality. All life of the ocean, I knew, depended ultimately on minute plants. The great fish and mammals fed on plant forms which were distributed throughout the seas. These grew in the waters themselves or were cast into them along their shores or by the thousands of rivers which eventually feed the ocean. The flora of all the earth, seeds, nuts, beans, leaves, kernels, swam or sank in the majority element, and aided in the nourishment of the creatures there. They had, also, taken root on shores foreign to their birth, and had, from immigrants, become esteemed natives of many lands. They had increased man's knowledge, too, as the sea-beans found on the shores of Scotland led to the discovery of that puzzle of all currents, the Gulf Stream. After all was said, the land was insignificant compared to the water—little more than a fourth of the surface of the globe, and in mass as puny. The average elevation of the land was less than a fifth of a mile, while the average depth of the sea was two miles, or thirty times the mass of the land. If the solid earth were smoothed down to a level, it would be entirely covered a mile deep by the water. I felt very close to the sea, and fearful of its might. I envied the natives their assurance, or, at least, stolidity.

The days were intensely hot. When the sails were furled or flapped idly, and the *Marara* lay almost still,

listening for even a whisper of wind, I suffered keenly. The second noon our common exasperation broke out in the inflammable Moet.

The captain shouted to Huahine, a sailor, to cover his head with a hat. The man was a giant, weighing more than two hundred and fifty pounds, but Moet addressed him as he would a child.

"Sapristi!" he yelled, *"Taupoo! Maamaa!* Your hat, you fool!"

"Diablo! amigo," he said, testily. "Zose nateev air babee. I have ze men paralyze by ze sun in ze Marqueses. In ze *viento,* when ze win' blow, no dan-gair, but when no blow—*sacré!* ze sun melts ze brain off-off."

Captain Moet was dramatic. Whatever he said he acted with face, hands and arms, feet, and even his whole body. He made a gesture that caused me to touch my own hat, to consider its resistance to the sun, to feel an anticipation of harm. Suddenly he took the arm of the sailor at the wheel, Piha a Teina, a Tahitian, and, releasing the spokes from his hands, himself began to steer.

"Go there in the lee of the mainsail," he said in Tahitian, "and tell the American about your terrible adventure when you almost died of thirst!"

"Look at him!" said Moet to me. "He is old before his time. The sun did that."

Piha a Teina stood beside me, shy, slow to begin his epic. He was shriveled and withered, pitifully marked by some experience unusal even to these Maori masters of this sea. I gave him a cigarette, and, lighting it, he began;

"I am Piha a Teina," he said. "I was living in the

Photo from L. Gauthier

The atoll of Niau

The anchorage at Tahauku. Atuona lies just around the first headland to the right

island of Marutea in the Paumotus when this thing happened. I set out one day in a cutter for Manga Reva. That island was seven hundred miles away, and we were sent, Pere Ani, my friend, and I, to bring back copra. The cutter was small, not so large as a ship's boat. We had food for eight or nine days, and as the wind was as we wanted it, blowing steadily toward Manga Reva, we felt sure we would arrive there in that time. But we lost the stars. They would not show themselves, and soon we did not know which way to steer. This schooner has a compass, but we could not tell the direction by the sun as we had not the *aveia*. We became uneasy and then afraid. Still we kept on by guess and hope, believing the wind could not have changed its mind since we started. On the tenth day we ate the last bite of our food. We had not stinted ourselves until the eighth day, and then we felt sure the next day or the next would bring the land.

"But on the eleventh day we saw nothing but the sea. I had a pearl hook and with it we caught *bonito*. We ate them raw. They made us thirsty, and we drank all our water. It did not rain for many days, and we drank the salt water. When it rained we had nothing in which to catch and keep the fresh water. We could only suck the wet sail which we had taken down because we had become too weak to handle it if the gale had caught us with it up. We drifted and drifted with the current. The sun beat upon us and we were burned like the breadfruit in the oven. I could not touch my breast in the daytime it was so hot. The time went on as slowly as the cocoanut-tree grows from the nut we plant. We left in the month you call October. Days and nights we

floated without using the tiller except to keep the cutter before the wind when it blew hard. We had been asleep maybe a day or two when a storm came. We did not wake up, but it cast us on the island of Rapa-iti. Pere Ani never woke up, but I am here. The sun killed him."

"How long were you in the cutter?" I asked.

Moet heard my question and replied:

"*Mais,* zey lef' Marutea in *octobre,* an' ze Zelee, the Franche war-sheep, fin' zem on Rapa-iti in Januaire. Zey was—*yo no se*—more zan seexty day in ze boat."

Piha a Teina expressed neither gladness nor sorrow that he had escaped the fate of Pere Ani. He knew, as his race, that fate was inexorable, and he contemplated life as the gift of a powerful force that could not be argued with nor threatened by prayers, though, to be in the mode, he might make such supplications.

"If I had had such a *hohoa moana,* a chart of the sea, as we formerly made of sticks," he said, "I could have found Manga Reva without the stars. We made them of straight and curved pieces of wood or bamboo, and we marked islands on them with shells. They showed the currents from the four quarters of the sea, and with them we made journeys of thousands of miles to the Marquesas and to Hawaii and Samoa. But we have forgotten how to make them, and I know nothing of the paper charts the white man has, but I can read the *aveia,* the compass of the schooner. We did not take our *hooa* in our canoes, but studied them at home."

The captain whistled, caught my eye, touched his forehead to signify Piha a Teina was wandering mentally, and summoned the sailor to take the wheel.

"He ees *maamaa* evvair since zat leetle voyage," he said, sagely.

On the morning of the fourth day from Papeete the first of the eighty Paumotu atolls raised a delicate green fringe of trees four or five miles away. It lay so low that from the deck of the schooner it could not be seen even on the clearest days at a greater distance. One heard the surf before the island appeared. It was only a few feet above the plane of the sea, flat, with no hill or eminence upon it, a leaf upon the surface of a pond. I could hardly believe it part of the familiar globe. It was more like the fairy-island of childhood, the coral strand of youth, the lotus land of poesy. It was, in reality, the most beautiful, fascinating, inconceivable sight upon the ocean.

McHenry and I stood with Chocolat and watched the slow rise of the atoll of Niau, as the *Marara,* under lessened sail and with Captain Moet at the helm, cautiously approached the land. We crept up to it, as one might to a trap in which one hoped to snare a hare but feared to find a wolf. All hands stood by for orders. Though the sky was azure and the sun broiling, one never knew in the Pernicious Islands when the unforeseen might happen.

Seven miles long and five wide, Niau was a matchless bracelet of ivory and jade. Grieg Island, some Anglo-Saxon discoverer once named it, but Grieg had fame abroad only. None spoke his name as we advanced warily over the road, familiar to them all as the Sulu Sea to me. The cargo for Niau came through the hatches, thrown up from the hold, sailor to sailor, and was piled on deck until all was checked. Madame Moet

was on the poop by the after door of the cabin, hanging over each item and marking it off upon her inventory, while Jean hummed the "Carmagnole," and swung the *Flying Fish* about on short tacks for her goal. Between the shifting of the canvas the long-boat was lowered, and the goods heaped in it: boxes and barrels, bales and buckets, edibles and clothing, matches and tobacco, gimcracks and patent medicines.

As closer we went, I saw that Niau was a perfect oval, composed of a number of separate islets or *motus*. These formed the land on which were the trees and shrubs and the people, but this oval itself was inclosed by a hidden reef, several hundred feet wide, on which the breakers crashed and spilled in a flood of foaming billows.

There was no enthusiasm over the beauty of Niau except in my heaving breast, and I concealed it as I would free thinking in a monastery. To McHenry and Jean and Virginia, a lovely atoll was but a speck upon the ocean on which to cozen inferior creatures.

"Madre de Dios!" vociferated the skipper, when, a mile from the gleaming teeth of the reef, he brought the *Marara* up into the wind and halted her like a panting mare thrown upon her haunches. "Mc'onree et M'sieu' O'Breeon, eef you go 'shore, tomble een, *pronto!*"

He released the wheel to the mate, and we three scrambled over the rail and jumped upon the cargo as the boat rose on a wave, joining the four Tahitians who were at the heavy oars, with Piri a Tuahine at the stern, holding a long sweep for a rudder. It was attached by a bight of rope, and by a longer rope kept from floating away in case of mishap.

Now came as delicate a bit of action with sails as a yachtsman, with his mother-in-law as a guest, might recklessly essay. Captain Moet sang out from his perch on a barrel to the half-caste at the wheel to go ahead, and the *Flying Fish,* which for a few minutes had been trembling in leash, turned on her heel and headed directly for the streak of foam, the roar of which drowned our voices at that distance.

Eight hundred feet away, when it must have looked to a landsman on the schooner that she was almost in the breakers, we cast off the line and took to our oars. It was nice seamanship to save time by minimizing rowing, but certainly not in Lloyd's rules of safety. Those who reckon dangers do not laugh in these parts. A merry rashness helps ease of mind.

In five minutes our boat was in the surf, rolling and tumbling, and I on my merchandise peak clasped a bale fervently, though McHenry and Moet appeared glued to barrels which they rode jauntily. It was now I saw the art of the Polynesians, the ablest breaker boatmen in the world.

All about seemed to me solid coral rock or distorted masses of limestone covering and uncovering with the surging water, but suddenly there came into my altering view, as the steersman headed toward it, a strange pit in the unyielding strata. Into this maelstrom the water rushed furiously, drawn in and sucked out with each roll of the ocean. The Tahitians, at a word, stopped rowing, while Piri a Tuahine scrutinized intently the onrushing waves. He judged the speed and force of each as it neared him, and on his accuracy of eye and mind depended our lives.

The oarsmen tugged with their blades to hold the boat against the sweeping tide, and abruptly, with a wild shout, Piri a Tuahine set them to pulling like mad, while he with his long oar both steered and sculled.

"Tamau te paina!" all yelled amid the boom of the surf.

"Hold on to the wood!" and down into the pit we tore; down and in, the boat raced through the vortex of the chute, the pilot avoiding narrowly the coffin-like sides of the menacing depression, and the sailors, with their oars aloft for the few dread seconds, awaiting with joyous shouts the emergence into the shallows. All was in the strong hands and steady nerves of Piri a Tuahine. A miscalculated swerve of his sturdy lever, and we would have been smashed like egg-shells, boat and bodies, against the massive sides. But spirit and wood were stedfast, and I rode as high and dry from the imminent Scylla as if on a camel in the Sahara.

In a few twinklings of an eye we were past the reef, and in the moat in fast shoaling, quiet water, studded with hummocks and heaps of coral. The sailors leaped into it shoulder-deep, and guided and forced the boat as far shoreward as possible, to curtail the cargo-carrying distance. Captain Moet, McHenry, and I went up to our waists, and reached the beach.

CHAPTER II

Meeting with Tommy Eustace, the trader—Strange soil of the atoll—A bath in the lagoon—Momuni, the thirsty bread baker—Off for Anaa.

THE crusader who entered Jerusalem had no deeper feeling of realization of a long-cherished hope than I when my foot imprinted its mold in the glistening sand of the atoll of Niau. I stood in my track and scanned it, as *Crusoe* the first human mark other than his own he saw on his lonely island. Not with his dismay, but yet with a slight panic, a pleasant but alarmed perturbation, an awe at the wonder of the scene. The moment had the tenseness of that when I saw my first cocoanut-palm; it mingled a fear that I had passed one of the great climacterics of visual emotion.

Here was I in the arcanum of romance, the promised land of chimera, after years of faint expectation. I was almost stunned by the reality, and I felt sensibly the need of some one to share the pathos that oppressed me. I did not forsake my love for Tahiti. That was fixed, but this atoll was not the same. Tahiti was an adored mistress, this a light o' love, a dazzling, alien siren, with whom one could not rest in safety; a fanciful abode for a brief period, as incomparable to Tahiti as an ice-field to a garden.

"What the bloody hell's eatin' on you?" exclaimed the irked McHenry, questioningly as he glared at me.

"Are n't your feet mates? [illegible] Tommy Eustace! He might have a bottle o' b[illegible] in a cool place."

Moet was shaking the salt water from his long, inky hair. He had stumbled and dipped his head in the brine.

"*'Sus-Maria!*" he swore. "Virginie she say Jean been drink.'"

A shed-like building of rough boards, with unpainted corrugated iron roof, was a hundred steps from the water, the store and warehouse of the single trader, who supplied the wants and ambitions of the hundred inhabitants of Niau and endeavored to monopolize a meager output of copra and pearl shell. It was on a rude road, which stretched along the beach, edged by a dozen houses, small, wooden huts, or thatched straw shanties, much more primitive and poor than in Tahiti. All the remainder of Niau was coral, water, and cocoanut-trees, except a scanty vegetation.

Thomas Eustace, the trader, or Tomé, as the natives called him, was in the doorway of his establishment, awaiting the sailors who had begun at once to carry the *Marara's* freight from the boat through the moat. A quarter of a century ago, a broth of a boy from Ireland, he had stepped off a ship alongside the Papeete quay, and had never left the South Seas since.

"*Faix,* I had the divil's own toime to shtay," say Tomé, as we four sat by an empty barrel head and drank the warmish beer he had offered us with instant hospitality.

"I waz that atthracted by the purty gir-ruls, the threes, and the foine-shmellin' flowers that the ould man of the ship nivir could dhraw me back to the pots an'

pans iv the galley. I waz the flunky in the kitchin iv a wind-jammin' Sassenach bark, peelin' praties, an' waitin' on sailormin. The father iv a darlin' hid me out be Fautaua falls, an' the *jondarmy* hunted an' hunted, wid nothin' for their thrubble."

A stoutish, quizzical man was Tomé, with brown face and throat and hands, a stubby, chewed mustache and sleepy, laughing eyes. By the purling steam of Fautaua, where Loti had lived his idyl with Rarahu and I had walked with a princess, Thomas Eustace became Tomé forever and ever. He was well satisfied to be bashaw of an atoll, unused to greater comfort as he was, and enamored of reef and palm, and the lazy, unstandardized life of the South Seas.

"Ye may picther me," he went on, as he poured the beer, "jumpin' out iv the p'isonous galley iv that wind-jammin' man-killer, an' fallin', be the grace iv God, into a grove iv cocoanuts, wid roas' pig, breadfruit, and oranges fur breakfus, *deejunee,* an' dinner, to whistle low about a brown fairy that swung on the same branch wid me! The Emerald Isle the divil! 'T is Tahiti 's the Tir-na'n-Og! This beats the bogs an' the peat an' the stirabout, wid no peeler to move you on, an' no *soggarth* to tell ye ye're a sinner!"

Tomé was ten years in Penrhyn, the noted pearl island belonging to New Zealand, and known as Tongareva. Lying Bill, McHenry, and Eustace were fellow-traders in that lonely spot. "Fellow" in such relations meant the affectionate intercourse of wolves who united to chase the sheep and quarrel over the carcass. McHenry and Tomé had greeted each other with cold familiarity, each knowing the other through and through, wondering

how the other would beat him, and yet not averse to an exchange of trade news and the gossip of Tahiti and the Group, as they called the Paumotus.

"How 's old Lovaina?" asked Tomé.

"Chargin' as much as ever for her cheap scoffin's," replied McHenry, who had never eaten a better meal than that served at the Tiaré Hotel. Eustace, I doubted not, was a square and genial man, but among his business kind he had to fight bludgeon with bludgeon. He opened a fresh cocoanut and diverted the mouth of an infant from its natural fount to make it swallow a few drops. The mother, a handsome, young woman, proud of her armful, gestured smilingly that Tomé was its father.

"Mavourneen dheelish!" he called her, and the baby, "Molly."

Cocoanuts differ in kind and quality as much as apples, and Eustace gave me a *kaipoa,* which at his direction I ate, husks and all, and found it delicious.

Leaving the two merchants to continue their armed banter, I stepped outside the store and struck off the road toward the center of the island; through fields of broken coral, mysterious in its oppositeness from all other terrestrial formations. There was no earth that one could see or feel, but a matted vegetation in spots showed that even in these whited sepulchers of the coral animals outlandish plants had found the substance of life. The flora, though desperate in its poverty, was heartening in that it could survive at all. The lofty cocoanut-palm, standing straight as a mast or curving in singular grace, grew luxuriantly—the evergreen banner of this giant fleet of anchored ships of stone.

Through a few hundred yards of this weird desert-jungle, I reached the lagoon which the inner marge of the great coral reef inclosed.

No lake that I have seen approached this mere in simple beauty, nor had artist's vision wrought a more startling, extravagant, yet perfect work of color. The lagoon of Niau was small enough to encompass with a glance from where I stood. I felt myself in an enchanted spot. Niau was not all wooded. For long stretches only the white coral lined the shores, with here and there the plumy palms refreshing the eyes—brilliant in contrast with the bare sheen of the coral, and softly rustling in the breeze.

The water of the lagoon was palest blue, verging to green, clear almost as the pure air, and the beach shelved rapidly into depths.

The beach was made up of tiny shells crumbling into sand, billions and billions of them in the twenty miles about the lagoon. In each of the legion coral isles this was repeated, so that the mind contemplating them was confused at the incalculable prodigality of the life expended to build them and the oddity of the problem arranged by the power planning them.

"Every single atom, from the least particle to the largest fragment of rock, in this great pile," said Darwin, "bears the stamp of having been subjected to organized arrangement. We feel surprised when travelers tell us of the vast dimensions of the Pyramids and other great ruins, but how utterly insignificant are the greatest of these when compared to these mountains of stone accumulated by the agency of various minute and tender

animals. This is a wonder which does not at first strike the eye of the body, but, after reflection, the eye of reason."

I sat down under a dwarf cocoanut and let my eyes and mind dwell upon the gorgeousness of the prospect and the insight into nature's reticences it afforded. Everywhere were the tombs or skeletons of the myriad creatures who had labored and died to construct these footstools of Might. Could man assume that these eons of years and countless births, efforts, and deaths, were for any concern of his? But else, he asked, why were they? To show the boundless power and caprice of the Creator? Was not the world made for humanity?

An atoll was to an island as a comet to a star—a freak or sport in the garden of the sea-gods. It was as if the Designer had planned to set up, in the thousand miles of ocean through which the Dangerous Islands stretched, a whimsical cluster of shallower salt lakes, and so had bidden trillions of tiny beings to inclose them. For, after all, an atoll was but a lagoon surrounded by a reef of coral, or rather two reefs, for in the plan of the Architect there was built a second reef for every atoll, and this outer barrier was sunken, as the one through which we had come, but yet took the brunt of the waves, and prevented them from washing away and destroying the innner and habitable reef on which I then sat.

This hidden shoal belted the beach regularly, so that it made a moat between the two; and yet in most atolls there was such an opening as that through which we had come, often a mere depression, sometimes a deep and wide mouth. One was forced to consider whether the Architect had not taken man into his scheme, for with-

out such an opening no people could reach the shore and lagoon. But the grievous fact was that in some atolls the minute workers had left no door and that man himself had torn one open with tools and explosives. Even once within the moat, our boat was in comparative safety only in the mildest weather, for the moat was studded with lumps and boulders of coral, and the most crafty guardianship was imperative to keep our craft whole.

If there had been an entry through the inner shore into the peaceful lagoon by which I lolled, then would anchorage and calm have been assured. So, of course, nature had in some other atolls than Niau attended to this detail, and these I was to find more inhabited and more developed, for in some even schooners might seek the haven of the lake, and a fleet lie there in security. The lagoons were thus, generally, safe and unflurried, though sometimes terribly harried by cyclones, such as Lying Bill described the Dane as riding from sea to sea across the entire island of Anaa.

Each of the Paumotus was made up of a number of *motus,* or islets, parted by lower strata in which was the moat water. This string of *motus* assumed many dissimilar figures. One had fifty pieces in its puzzle—a puzzle not fully solved by science, or, at least, still in dispute. The *motus* were all formed of coral rock of comparatively recent origin geologically. Were these atolls the mountain-tops of a lost Atlantis or thrust-up marine plateaus? The wise men differed. A theory was that the atolls were coral formations upon volcanic islands that had slowly sunk, each a monument marking an engulfed island or mountain peak.

Another, that volcanic activity, which mothered the

high islands in these seas, caused to rise from the bottom of the ocean a series of submerged tablelands, leveled by the currents and waves, on which the coral insects erected the reefs—reefs just peeping above the surface of the water—and on which the storms threw great blocks of madrepores and coral broken from the mass. When in this condition, mere rocky rings of milky coral, over which each billow swept, without life or aught else than the structures of the marvelous zoöphytes, floors cut and broken here and there by the surging and pounding breakers, the hand of the Master raised them up, as through Polynesia other islands had been raised, and fixed these Paumotus as the fairest growths of Neptune's park.

Lifted above the watery level, they were able to begin their task of usefulness. Seeds carried by currents, borne by the winds, or brought by those greatest of all pioneers and settlers of new countries, the sea-birds, were flung on these ready, but yet barren, atolls, and vegetation gave them an entrancing present.

Volcano and insect combined to make these coral blossoms of the South Seas so different from any other mundane formations that the man with any dreaming in his soul stood awe-struck at the wonder and artistry of nature. They were the most wonderful and simple of nature's works. They eluded portrayal by brush and camera. No canvas or film could grasp their symmetry and grace, seize more than a fragment of their alluring form or hint of their admirable colors. Ravishing scenes from the deck of a ship, and marvels of construction and hue when upon them, they were sad and

disappointing to the dweller, like a lovely woman who has a bad disposition.

Circles, ovals, and horseshoes, regular and irregular, a few miles or a hundred in circumference, the Paumotus were always essentially the same—the lagoon and the fringe of reef and palm. These *Iles Dangereuses* were the supreme in creation in harmonious light and shade. They were the very breath of imagination. My thoughts harked back to the dawn of life, and the struggle between the land and water in which continents and islands were drowned, and others rose to be the home of beast and man, when God said, "Let the dry land appear."

These atolls had fought the ceaseless war which slowly, but eternally, shifted our terrestrial foothold. Makatea, nearer Tahiti, lifted its strange cliffs two hundred feet in the air. It had been raised by subterranean force thirty-five fathoms from the sea-level, and its coasts were vertical walls of that height.

The young Darwin's theory appealed even with these examples of resurgence. It was improbable that an elevatory force would uplift through an immense area great, rocky banks within twenty or thirty fathoms of the surface of the sea, and not a single point above that level. Where on the surface of the globe was a chain of mountains, even a few hundred miles in length, with their many summits rising within a few feet of a given level, and not one pinnacle above it? Yet that was the condition in these atolls, for the coral animal could not live more than thirty fathoms or so below the atmosphere, so that the basic foundations of the atolls, on which the

mites laid their offerings and their bones, were fewer than two hundred feet under the surface. The polyp gnome died from the pressure of water at greater depths. Just outside the reefs or between the atolls, the depths were often greater than a mile or two.

The vague science I possessed stimulated the memories of my reading of that oldest civilization in tradition, the immense continent of Pan, which a score of millenniums ago, according to the poet archæologists, flourished in this Pacific Ocean. Its cryptogram attended in many spots the discovery of a new Rosetta stone. I myself had seen huge monoliths, half-buried pyramids and High Places, hieroglyphs and carvings, certainly the fashioning of no living races. Were these Paumotus, and many other islands from Japan to Easter, the tops of the submerged continent, Pan, which stretched its crippled body along the floor of the Pacific for thousands of leagues? There were legends, myths, customs, inexplicable absences of usages and knowledge on the part of present peoples, all perhaps capable of interpretation by this fascinating theory of a race lost to history before Sumer attained coherence or Babylon made bricks.

Over this land bridge, mayhap, ventured a Caucasian people, the dominant blood in Polynesia to-day, and when the connecting links in the chain to their cradle fell from the sights of sun and stars, the survivors were isolated for ages on the islands like Tahiti and the Marquesas. On the mountain-tops, plateaus beneath the water, the coral insect built up these atolls until they stood in their wondrous shapes splendid examples of

A Paumotu atoll after a blow

Photo by Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

A squall approaching Anaa

nature's self-arrested labor, sculptures of unbelievable brilliancy.

To them came first Caucasians who had been spared in the cataclysm, and later the new sailors of giant canoes who followed from Asia the line of islets and atolls, fighting with and conquering the Caucasians, and merging into them in the course of generations. These first and succeeding migrations must have been forced by devastating natural phenomena, by terrible economic pressure, by wars and tribal feuds. It was not probable that any people deliberately chose these atolls in preference to the higher lands, but that they occupied them in lieu of better on account of evil fortune.

These eighty Paumotu islands averaged about forty miles apart, with only two thousand people in all of them, which would allow, if equally distributed, only twenty-five inhabitants to each. On more than half of them no person lived, and all the others were scantily peopled. Three or four hundred might occupy one atoll where shell and cocoanuts were bountiful and fish plentiful and good, while two score and more atolls were left for the frigate-bird to build its nest and for the robber-crab to eat its full of nuts.

The thud of a cocoanut beside me stirred me from my reverie. I was wet with the wading ashore and the sweat of my walk, and so I removed my few garments and plunged into the lagoon. Going down to test the declivity a yard or so from the water's edge I dropped twenty feet and touched no bottom. The water was limpid, delicious, and I could see the giant coral fans waving fifty feet below me.

As I loitered on my back in the water, and looked down into the crystal depths and at the cloudless sky, I had a moment's phantasm of a great city, its lofty trade battlements, its crowded streets, the pale, set faces of its people, the splendor of the rich houses, the squalor of the tenements, the police with clubs and guns, and the shrieking traffic. Here was the sweetest contrast, where man had hardly touched the primitive work of nature. It was long from Sumer, and far from Gotham.

I was floating at ease when I heard a voice. It seemed to come out of the water. It was soft and almost etheric.

"Maitai!" it said, which meant, "You 're all right."

I turned on my side, and by my garments was a long, gaunt Niauan, with a loose mouth, loafing there, with his eyes fawning upon me. He smiled sweetly, and said, "Goodanighta!"

As it was hardly seven o'clock in the morning, the sun a ball of fire, and the glare of the reef like the shine of a boy's mirror in one's eyes, I argued against his English education. But courtesy is not correction. I said in kind, "Goodanighta!" He came into the water and repaid me by shaking my hand, and with a movement toward the beach, said, "Damafina!"

"Maitai!" I corroborated his opinion, and then he beckoned to me to leave the lagoon and follow him. I dressed, all moist as I was, and we returned toward the village, I wondering what design on me he had.

"She canna fik (fix) you show Niau," my cicerone explained, as he waved toward the island.

"All right, good, number one," I assented.

He laughed with pleased vanity at his success in conversing with mĕ in my tongue and at the envious looks of the people on their tiny porches as we passed them, and I saluted them.

"Momuni! Momuni!" they called after him with scornful laughter, and beckoned me to leave him and join them.

"Haere mai!" they said, sweetly to me. Come to us!"

My guide did not like either the name they gave him or their efforts to alienate us. He retorted with an impolite gesticulation, and cried, *"Popay! Popay!" Momuni,* though, was plainly nervous, and afraid that I might be won over by the opposition. He plucked me by my wet sleeve and directed me to a shanty of old boards set upon a platform of coral rocks four feet from the bed of the atoll. In its single room on a white bedspread were a dozen loaves of bread, crisp and white, and smelling appetizingly. He lifted one, squeezed it to show its sponginess, and put it to my nose. He sniffed, and said, "She the greata coo-ooka."

I guessed that he referred to himself as the baker. He pointed out toward the schooner and made me understand that this baking was a present to me. I was embarrassed, and with many flourishes explained that the Tahitian cook of the *Marara* could not be compared with him as a bread-maker, but that he was of a jealous disposition and might resent bitterly the gift. My companion was cast down for a moment, but brightened with another idea. Through a hundred yards more of coral bones we plowed to his oven, a huge, coral stove like a lime-kiln, with a roof, and bags of Victor

flour from the Pacific Coast beside it. Pridefully he made me note everything, as an artist might his studio.

Momuni then touched my arm, and said, *"Haere!* We can do."

We walked along the beach of the lagoon and found a road that paralleled the one we had come. It was lower than the other and the rain had flooded it. The water was brown and stagnant, even red in pools, like blood. Uncanny things shot past my feet or crawled upon them, and once something that had not the feel of anything I knew of climbed the calf of my leg, and when I turned and saw it dimly I leaped into the air and kicked it off. I heard it plop into the dark water.

Down this marsh we plodded and paddled, floundered and splashed for half a mile. The cocoanut-palms arched across it, but there was not a person nor a habitation in view. I wondered why "she the great cook" had led me into this morass. *Momuni* looked at me mysteriously several times, and his lips moved as if he had been about to speak.

He studied my countenance attentively, and several times he patted and rubbed my back affectionately and said, "You damafina." Then, slimy and sloppy as I was, covered with the foul water up to my waist, when we were in the darkest spot *Momuni* halted and drew me under a palm.

He would either seek to borrow money or to cut my throat, I thought hastily. Again he scanned me closely, and I, to soften his heart and avert the evil, tried to appear firm and unafraid. To my astonishment he took from his pocket five five-franc notes, those ugly, red-inked bills which are current in all the

Etablissements Français de l'Oceanie, and held them under my nose. He smiled and then made the motion of pulling a cork, and of a bottle's contents gurgling through his loose mouth and down his long neck.

I shuddered at my thoughts. Could it be that in this dry atoll, with intoxicants forbidden, and prison the penalty of selling or giving them to a native, this hospitable Niauan had offered me his bread and shown me his oven, and the glories of the isle, and was displaying those five red notes to seduce me into breaking the law, into smuggling ashore a bottle of rum or wine?

I was determined to know the worst. I drew from my drawers (I had worn no trousers) an imaginary corkscrew, and from my undershirt an unsubstantial bottle. I pulled a supposititious cork, and took a long drink of the unreal elixir. *Momuni* was transfixed. His jaws worked, and his tongue extended. He squeezed my hand with happiness and hope, and left in it the five scarlet tokens of the *Banque de l'Indo-Chine.*

"Wina damafina; rumma damafina," he confided. The man would be content with anything, so it bit his throat and made him a king for an evil hour.

Tomé was dealing out tobacco when we reached his store. His wife and baby, an Irish-Penrhyn baby, were now eating a can of salmon and Nabisco wafers.

"Who is this gentleman, Mr. Eustace?" I asked, pointing to *Momuni.*

"He 's an *omadhaun,* a nuisance, that he is, sure," said Tomé. "He 's a Mormon deacon that peddles bread an' buys his flour from some one else because I won't trust him. He 's the only Mormon in this blessed

island. Every last soul is a Roman Cat'lic, except me, and I 'm a believer in the *leprechawn.* Has that hooligan been thryin' to work ye for a bottle of rum? He 'll talk a day for a drink."

"What 's *Momuni* and *Popay?"*

"Momuni is the way they say 'Mormons.' The other's the pope wid the accint on the last syllable. It 's the name for Cat'lics all over these seas, because they worship the pope iv Rome. The Popays run this island, but the Momunis have got Takaroa and some others by the tail."

I turned to look at my guide, the bread-maker. I had new admiration for him. It took courage to be the one Mormon among a hundred Catholics, and to try to sell them the staff of life. But he could not withstand the withering glances of Tomé, and fled, with gestures to me which I could only hazard to mean to meet him later in the fearsome swamp, with the rum.

"Does *Momuni* owe you any money?" I asked the trader, who was lighting his wife's cigarette.

"Does he? He owes me forty francs for flour, and I 'll nivir see the shadow iv them. I 'll tell ye, though, he 's the best baker in the Group, an' they 're crazy about his bread."

Eustace had no cargo for us, and McHenry and I caught the last boat for the *Marara,* Moet having stayed for one trip only.

"Come an' shtay wid us a month or two," said Tomé in farewell. "We 'll make ye happy and find ye a sweetheart! 'T is here ye can shpend yer valibil time doin' nawthin' at all, at all."

He laughed heartily at his joke on virtue, and as we

dashed through the surf to climb into the boat I turned to see him telling the assembling villagers some story that might provoke a laugh and keep their copra a monopoly for him.

CHAPTER III

Perilous navigation—Curious green sky—Arrival at Anaa—Religion and the movies—Character of Paumotuans.

A CURRENT set against us all night. Now I understood fully the alarms and misgivings that had caused the first and following discoverers of the "Pernicious Islands" to curse them by the titles they gave them. Our current was of the mischievous sort that upset logarithms and dead reckoning, and put ships ashore.

"This group is a graveyard of vessels," said McHenry, "and there 'd be ten times as many wrecked, if they come here. Wait till you see the *County of Roxburgh* at Takaroa! I 've been cruisin' round here more 'n twenty years, and I never saw the current the same. The Frog Government at Papeete is always talkin' about puttin' lighthouses on a half-dozen of these atolls, but does nothin'. Maybe the chief or a trader hangs a lantern on top of his house when he expects a cargo for him, but you can't trust those lights, and you can't see them in time to keep from hittin' the reef. There 's no leeway to run from a wind past beating. It 's lee shore in some bloody direction all the time.

"There 's a foot or two between high and low, and it 's low in the lagoon when the moon is full. It 's high when the moon rises and when it sets. In atolls where there 's a pass into the lagoon, there 's a hell

of a current in the lagoon at the lowerin' tide, and in the sea near the lagoon when the tide is risin'. We're goin' to beat those tides with engines. In five years every schooner in the group will have an auxiliary. There's only one now, the *Fetia Taiao,* and she 's brand new. It used to be canoes, and then whaleboats, and then cutters here, and purty soon it 'll be gasolene schooners."

Then will the cry arise that romance has perished of artificiality. But the heart of man is always the same, and nothing kills romance but sloth.

We battled with the current and a fresh wind during the long, dark hours, Jean Moet never leaving the deck, and I keeping him company. Below on a settee Virginie said her beads or slept. I could see her by the smudgy cabin lamp, and hear her call to her husband two or three times, hours apart, *"Ça va bien?"* Jean would answer in Tahitian, as to a sailor, *"Maitai,"* and invariably would follow his mechanical reply, with *"Et toi, dors-tu?"*

Ever light-hearted, currents nor squalls could burden his Gascon spirit. He looked at the stars, and he looked at the water, he consulted with the mate, and gave orders to the steersman.

"Eh b'en," he said to me, *"moi,* I am *comme monsieur* ze *gouverneur* ov ze Paumotu who live een Favarava, over zere." He pointed into the darkness. " 'E 'as a leetle schoonaire an' 'e keep ze court and ze calaboose, bot mos'ly 'e lis'en to ze *musique* an' make ze dance. *La vie est triste; vive la bagatelle!* Maybee we pick op Anaa in ze morning. Eef not, *amigo mio,* Virginie she weel pray for *nous* both.

Anaa, or Chain Island, as Captain Cook named it because of its eleven *motus* or islets, strung like emeralds and pearls in a rosary, was not visible at daybreak, but as I studied the horizon the sky turned to a brilliant green. I thought some dream of that Tir-na'n-Og spoken of by Tomé in Niau obsessed me. I turned my back and waited for my eyes to right themselves. One sees green in the rainbow and green in the sunset, but never had I known a morning sky to be of such a hue. McHenry came on deck in his pajamas, and looked about.

"Erin go bragh!" he remarked. "Ireland is castin' a shadow on the bloody heaven. There," he pointed, "is the sight o' the bleedin' world. You 've never seen it before an' you won't see it again, unless you come to Anaa in the mornin' or evenin' of a purty clear day. It 's the shinin' of the lagoon of Anaa in the sky, an' it 's nowhere else on the ball. There 's many a Kanaka in 'is canoe outa sight o' land has said a prayer to his god when he seen that green. He knew he was near Anaa. You can see that shine thirty or thirty-five miles away, hours before you raise the atoll."

Some curious relation of the lagoon to the sky had painted this hazy lawn on high. It was like a great field of luscious grass, at times filmy, paling to the color of absinthe touched with water, and again a true aquamarine, as I have seen the bay of Todos Santos, at Enseñada of Lower California. Probably it is the shallowness of the waters, which in this lagoon are strangely different from most of the inland basins of the South Sea Isles. To these mariners, who moved their little boats between them, the mirage was famed; and the

natives had many a legend of its origin and cause, and of their kind being saved from starvation or thirst by its kindly glint.

McHenry called down the companionway, "Hey, *monster,* you can see the grass on Anaa. *Vite-vite!*"

Moet, who was below, drinking a cup of coffee, leaped up the companionway. He called out swift orders to go over on the other tack, and headed straight for the mirage. The schooner heeled to the breeze, now freshening as the sun became hotter, and we reeled off six or seven knots with all canvas drawing. In an hour the celestial plot of green had vanished, fading out slowly as we advanced, and we began to glimpse the cocoanuts on the beach, though few trees showed on the sky-line, and they were twisted as in travail.

Anaa, as others of these islands and Tahiti, too, had suffered terribly by a cyclone a few years ago. More than any other island of this group Anaa had felt the devastating force of the *matai rorofai,* the "wind that kills"—the wind that slew Lovaina's son and made her cut her hair in mourning. Hikueru lost more people, because there were many there; but Anaa was mangled and torn as a picador's horse by the horns of the angry bull. A half-mile away we could plainly see the havoc of wind and wave. The reef itself had been broken away in places, and coral rocks as big as houses hurled upon the beach.

"I was there just after the cyclone," said McHenry. "It was a bloomin' garden before then, Anaa. It was the only island in the Paumotus in which they grew most of the fruits as in Tahiti, the breadfruit, the banana, the orange, lime, mango, and others. It may

be an older island than the others or more protected usually from the wind; but, anyhow, it had the richest soil. The Anaa people were just like children, happy and singin' all the time. That damned storm knocked them galley-west. It tore a hole in the island, as you can see, killed a hundred people, and ended their prosperity. There was a Catholic church of coral, old and bloody fine, and when I got here a week after the cyclone I could n't find the spot where the foundations had been. I came with the vessels the Government sent to help the people. You never seen such a sight. The most of the dead were blown into the lagoon or lay under big hunks of coral. People with crushed heads and broken legs and arms and ribs were strewn all around. The bare reef is where the village was, and the people who went into the church to be safe were swept out to sea with it."

As at Niau, the schooner lay off the shore, and the long-boat was lowered. In it were placed the cargo, and with Moet, McHenry, and me, men, women, and children passengers, four oarsmen and the boat-steerer, it was completely filled, we sitting again on the boxes.

Once more the *Flying Fish* towed the boat very near to the beach, and at the cry of "Let go!" flung away the rope's end and left us to the oars. The passage through the reef of Anaa was not like that of Niau. There was no pit, but a mere depression in the rocks, and it took the nicest manœuvering to send the boat in the exact spot. As we approached, the huge boulders lowered upon us, threatening to smash us to pieces, and we backed water and waited for the psychological moment. The surf was strong, rolling seven or eight feet

high, and crashing on the stone with a menacing roar, but the boat-steerer wore a smile as he shouted, *"Tamau te paina!"*

The oars lurched forward in the water, the boat rose on the wave, and onward we surged; over the reef, scraping a little, avoiding the great rocks by inches almost, and into milder water. The sailors leaped out, and with the next wave pulled the boat against the smoother strand; but it was all coral, all rough and all dangerous, and I considered well the situation before leaving the boat. I got out in two feet of water and raced the next breaker to the higher beach, my camera tied on my head.

There was no beach, as we know the word—only a jumbled mass of coral humps, millions of shells, some whole, most of them broken into bits, and the rest mere coarse sand. On this were scattered enormous masses of coral, these pieces of the primitive foundation upheaved and divided by the breakers when the cyclone blew. The hand of a Titan had crushed them into shapeless heaps and thrown them hundreds of feet toward the interior, the waves washing away the soil, destroying all vegetation, and laying bare the crude floor of the island. From the water's edge I walked over this waste, gleaming white or milky, for a hundred yards before I reached the copra shed of Lacour, a French trader, and sat down to rest. The sailors bore the women and children on their shoulders to safety, and then commenced the landing of the merchandise for Lacour. Flour and soap, sugar, biscuit, canned goods, lamps, piece goods; gauds and gewgaws, cheap jewelry, beads, straw for making hats, perfumes and shawls.

Lacour, pale beneath his deep tan, black-haired and slender, greeted us at the shed with the dead-and-alive manner of many of these island exiles, born of torrid heat, long silences, and weariness of the driven flesh. A cluster of women lounged under a *tohonu* tree, the only shade near-by, and they smiled at me and said, *"Ia ora na oe!"*

I strolled inland. It was an isle of desolation, ravaged years ago, but prostrated still, swept as by a gigantic flail. Everywhere I beheld the results of the cataclysm.

Picking up shells and bits of coral at haphazard, I came upon the bone of a child, the forearm, bleached by wind and rain. Few of the bodies of the drowned had been interred with prayer, but found a last resting-place under the coral débris or in the maws of the sharks that rode upon the cyclone's back in search of prey.

It was very hot. These low atolls were always excessively warm, but not humid. It was a dry heat. The reflection of the sunlight on the blocks of coral and the white sand made a glare that was painful to whites, and made colored glasses necessary to shield their eyes. Temporary blindness was common among new-comers, thus unprotected.

I walked miles and never lost the evidence of violence and loss. There was an old man by a coral pen, in which were three thin, measly pigs, a grayish yellow in color. He showed me to a small, wooden church.

"There are four Catholic churches in Anaa," he said, "with one priest, and there are three hundred souls all told in this island. The priest goes about to the different churches, but money is scarce. This New Year

the contributjon was so trifling, the priest, who knew the bishop in Papeete would demand an accounting, sent word to know why—and what do you think he got back? That Lacour, the trader, with his accursed cinematograph, had taken all the money. He charged twenty-five cocoanuts to see the views in his copra shed, and they are wonderful; but the churches are empty. We are all *Katorika.*"

"*Katorika?*" I queried. "That is Popay?"

The old man frowned.

"Popay! That is what the *Porotetani* [Protestants] call the Katorika. I am the priest's right hand. But we are poor, and Lacour, with his store and now with his machine that sets the people wild over cowaboyas, and shows them the Farani [French] and the Amariti [Americans] in their own islands—there is no money for the church."

I interrupted the jeremiad of the ancient acolyte.

"Was there nothing left of the old church?" I asked.

The hater of cinematographs took me into the humble wooden structure, and there were a bronze crucifix and silver candlesticks that had been in the coral edifice.

"I saved them," he said proudly. "When I saw the wind was too great, when the church began to rock, I took them and buried them in a hole I dug. I did this before I climbed the tree which saved me from the big wave. Ah, that was a real cathedral. The people of Anaa are changed. The best died in the storm. They want now to know what is going on in Papeete, the great world."

A hundred years ago the people of Anaa erected three temples to the god of the Christians. For a century

they have had the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

Anaa had witnessed a bitter struggle between contending churches to win adherents. When France took hold, France was Catholic, and the priests had every opportunity and assistance to do their pious work. The schools were taught by Catholic nuns. Their governmental subsidy made it difficult for the English Protestants to proselytize, and with grief they saw their flocks going to Rome. Only the most zealous Protestant missionaries were unshaken by the change. When the anti-clerical feeling in France triumphed, the Concordat was broken, and the schools laicized, the priests and nuns in these colonies were ousted from the schools; the Catholic church was not only not favored, but, in many instances, was hindered by officials who were of anti-clerical feelings. The Protestant sects took heart again, and made great headway. The Mormons returned, the Seventh Day Adventists became active, and many nominal Catholics fell away. The fact was that it was not easy to keep Polynesians at any heat of religion. They wanted entertainment and amusement, and if a performance of a religious rite, a sermon, revival, conference, or other solace or diversion was not offered, they inclined to seek relaxation and even pleasure where it might be had. Monotony was the substance of their days, and relief welcomed in the most trifling incident or change.

Lacour's wife, granddaughter of a Welshman but all native in appearance, sat with the other women under the *tohonu* tree when I returned. I had seen thousands of fallen cocoanut-trees rotting in the swamps, and had climbed over the coral fields for several miles. There

Photo from Underwood and Underwood

Picking up the atoll of Anaa from the deck of the schooner *Flying Fish*

Photo from L. Gauthier

Canoes and cutters at atoll of Anaa, Paumotu Islands

was no earth, only coral and shells and white shell-sand. Chickens evidently picked up something to eat, for I saw a dozen of them. In the lagoon, fish darted to and fro.

Lacour's wife had a yellowish baby in her lap, and she wore earrings, a wedding-ring, and a necklace and bracelets.

The boat was plying from the schooner to the shore, and I watched its progress. Piri a Tuahine held the steering oar, laughing, calling to his fellows to pull or not to pull, as I could see through a glass. A current affected the surf, increasing or decreasing its force at intervals, and it was now at its height. The boat entered the passage on a crest, but a following wave struck it hard, turned it broadside, and all but over. A flood entered the boat, but the men leaped out and, though up to their shoulders in the water, held it firm, and finally drew it close to the beach. The flour and the boxes and beds of native passengers were wetted, but they ran to the boat and carried their belongings near to the copra shed, and spread them to dry. Lacour cursed the boat and the sailors.

Near Lacour's store was a house, in which lived Captain Nimau, owner of a small schooner. Nimau invited me to sleep there and see the moving pictures. We had brought Lacour a reel or so, and in anticipation, the people of Anaa had been gathering cocoanuts for a week. The films were old ones that Tahiti had wearied of, and Lacour got them for a trifle. The theater was his copra house, and there were no seats nor need of them.

He set the hour of seven for the show, and I alone stayed ashore for it. By six o'clock the residents began

flocking to the shed with their entrance-fees. Each bore upon his back twenty-five cocoanuts, some in bags and others with the nuts tied on a pole by their husk. Fathers carried double or even triple quantities for their little ones, and each, as he arrived at Lacour's, counted the nuts before the trader.

The women brought their own admission tickets. The acolyte, who had inveighed against the cinematograph, was second in line, and secured the best squatting space. His own cocoanuts were in Lacour's bin.

When the screen was erected and the first picture flashed upon it, few of the people of Anaa were absent, and Lacour's copra heap was piled high. There were a hundred and sixty people present, and four thousand nuts in the box-office.

The first film was concerned with the doings of *Nick Winter,* an English detective in France, a burlesque of *Sherlock Holmes,* and other criminal literatures. The spectators could not make a head nor tail of it, but they enjoyed the scenes hugely and were intensely mystified by many pictures. An automobile, which, by the trickery of the camera, was made to appear to climb the face of a sky-scraper, raised cries of astonishment and assertions of *diablerie.* The devil was a very real power to South Sea Islanders, whether they were Christians or not, and they had fashioned a composite devil of our horned and cloven-hoofed chap and their own demons, who was made responsible for most trouble and disaster that came to them, and whose machinations explained sleight of hand, and even the vagaries of moving pictures.

What pleased them most were cow-boy pictures, the

melodramatic life of the Wild West of America, with bucking bronchos, flying lassos, painted Indians whom they thought tattooed, and dashes of *vaqueros,* border sheriffs, and maidens who rode cayuses like Comanches. Tahiti was daft over cow-boys, and had adopted that word into the language, and these Anaans were vastly taken by the same life. Lacour explained the pictures as they unrolled, shouting any meanings he thought might pass; and I doubted if he himself knew much about them, for later he asked me if all cow-boys were not Spaniards.

This was the first moving picture machine in these islands. Lacour had only had it a few weeks. He purposed taking it through the Group on a cutter that would transport the cocoanut receipts. Lacour, Nimau, and I sat up late. These Frenchmen save for a few exceptions were as courteous as at home. Peasants or sailors in France, they brought and improved with their position that striking cosmopolitan spirit which distinguishes the Gaul, be he ever so uneducated. The English and American trader was suspicious, sullen or blatant, vulgar and often brutal in manner. The Frenchman had *bonhomie,* politeness. England and America in the South Seas considered this a weakness, and aimed at the contrary. Manners, of course, originated in France.

"This island is on the French map as *La Chaîne,*" said Captain Nimau, "but we who traverse these seas always use the native names. Those old admirals who took word to their king that they had discovered new islands always said, too, that they had named them after the king or some saint. A Spaniard selected a

nice name like the Blessed Sacrament or the Holy Mother of God, or some Spanish saint, while a Frenchman chose something to show the shape or color of the land. The Englishman usually named his find after some place at home, like New England, New Britain, and so on. But we don't give a *sacré* for those names. How could we? All those fellows claimed to have been here first, and so all islands have two or three European names. We who have to pick them up in the night, or escape from them in a storm, want the native name as we need the native knowledge of them. The landmarks, the clouds, the smells, the currents, the passes, the depths—those are the items that save or lose us our lives and vessels. Let those *vieux capitaines* fight it out below for the honor of their nomenclature and precedence of discovery!"

What recriminations in Hades between Columbus and Vespucci!

"Take this whole archipelago!" continued Nimau. "The Tahitians named it the Poumotu or pillar islands, because to them the atolls seemed to rise like white trees from the sea. But the name sounded to the people here like Paumotu, which means conquered or destroyed islands, and so, after a few petitions or requests by proud chiefs, the French in 1852 officially named them Tuamotu, distant, out of view, or below the horizon. That was more than a half century ago, but we still call them the Paumotu. There 's nothing harder to change than the old names of places. You can change a man's or a whole island's religion much easier."

Near the little hut in which we were, Nimau's house, a bevy of girls smoked cigarettes and talked about me.

They had learned that I was not a sailor, not one of the crew of the *Marara,* and not a trader. What could I be, then, but a missionary, as I was not an official, because not French? But I was not a Catholic missionary, for they wore black gowns; and I could not be Mormoni nor Konito, because there in public I was with the Frenchmen, drinking beer. Two, who were handsome, brown, with teeth as brilliant as the heart of the nacre, and eyes and hair like the husks of the ripe cocoanut, came into the house and questioned Lacour.

"They want to know what you are doing here," interpreted Lacour.

"I am not here to make money nor to preach the Gospel," I replied.

The younger came to me and put her arms about me, and said: *"Ei aha e reva a noho io nei!"* And that meant, "Stay here always and rest with me!"

After a while the acolyte joined us, and I put them all many questions.

The Paumotuans were a quiet people, dour, or at least serious and contemplative. They were not like the Tahitians, laugh-loving, light-hearted, frenzied dancers, orators, music worshipers, feasters. The Tahitians had the joy of living, though with the melancholy strain that permeated all Polynesia. The folk of the Dangerous Archipelago were silent, brooding, and religious. The perils they faced in their general vocation of diving, and from cyclones, which annihilated entire populations of atolls, had made them intensely susceptible to fears of hell-fire and to hopes of heaven. The rather Moslem paradise of Mormonism made strong appeal, but was offset by the tortures of the damned,

limned by other earnest clerics who preached the old Wesley-Spurgeon everlasting suffering for all not of their sect.

Had religion never affected the Paumotuans, their food would have made them a distinct and a restrained people. We all are creatures of our nourishment. The Tahitians had a plentitude of varied and delicious food, a green and sympathetic landscape, a hundred waterfalls and gentle rills. The inhabitants of these low isles had cocoanut and fish as staples, and often their only sustenance for years. No streams meander these stony beds, but rain-water must be caught, or dependence placed on the brackish pools and shallow wells in the porous rocks or compressed sand, which ebbed and flowed with the tides.

To a Tahitian his brooks were his club, where often he sat or lay in the laughing water, his head crowned with flowers, dreaming of a life of serene idleness. Once or twice a day he must bathe thoroughly. He was clean; his skin was aglow with the effect of air and water. No European could teach him hygiene. He was a perfect animal, untainted and unsoiled, accustomed to laving and massage, to steam, fresh, and salt baths, when Europeans, kings, courts, and commoners went unwashed from autumn to summer; when in the *"Lois de la Galanterie,"* written for beaux and dandies in 1640, it was enjoined that "every day one should take pains to wash one's hands, and one should wash one's face almost as often."

Environment, purling rivulets under embowering trees, the most enchanting climate between pole and pole, a simple diet but little clothing, made the Tahitian

and Marquesan the handsomest and cleanest races in the world. Clothes and cold are an iron barrier to cleanliness, except where wealth affords comfort and privacy. Michelangelo wore a pair of socks many years without removing them. Our grandfathers counted a habit of frequent bathing a sign of weakness. In old New England many baths were thought conducive to immorality, by some line of logic akin to that of my austere aunt, who warned me that oysters led to dancing.

The Paumotuan, before the white man made him a mere machine for gathering copra and pearl-shell and pearls, had a very distinct culture, savage though it was. He was the fabric of his food and the actions induced in him by necessity. Ellis, the interesting missionary diarist of Tahiti and Hawaii, recorded that in 1817, when at Afareaitu, on Moorea, he was printing for the first time the Bible in Tahitian "among the various parties in Afareaitu . . . were a number of natives of the Paumotu, or Pearl Islands, which lie to the northwest of Tahiti and constitute what is called the Dangerous Archipelago. These numerous islands, like those of Tetuaroa to the north, are of coralline formation, and the most elevated parts of them are seldom more than two or three feet above high water mark. The principal, and almost only, edible vegetable they produce is the fruit of the cocoanut. On these, with the numerous kinds of fishes resorting to their shores or among the coral reefs, the inhabitants entirely subsist. They appear a hardy and industrious race, capable of enduring great privations. The Tahitians believe them to be cannibals. . . . They are in general firm and muscular,

but of a more spare habit of body than the Tahitians. Their limbs are well formed, their stature generally tall. The expression of their countenance, and the outline of their features, greatly resemble those of the Society Islanders; their manners are, however, more rude and uncourteous. The greater part of the body is tattooed, sometimes in broad stripes, at others in large masses of black, and always without any of the taste and elegance frequently exhibited in the figures marked on the persons of the Tahitians."

One who traveled much in the isolated parts of the world was often struck by the unfitness of certain populated places to support in any comfort and safety the people who generation after generation persisted in living in them. For thousands of years the slopes of Vesuvius have been cultivated despite the imminent horror of the volcano above. The burning Paumotu atolls are as undesirable for residences as the desert of Sahara. Yet the hot sands are peopled, and have been for ages, and in the recesses of the frozen North the processes of birth and death, of love and greed, are as absorbing as in the Edens of the earth. Hateful as a lengthy enforced stay in the Paumotus might be to any of us, I have seen two Paumotuan youths dwelling abroad for the first time in their lives, eating delicious food and hardly working at all, weep hours upon hours from homesickness, a continuous longing for their atoll of Puka-ruhu, where they had half starved since birth, and where the equatorial typhoon had raped time and again. Nature, in her insistence that mankind shall continue, implanted that instinct of home in us as one of the most powerful agents of survival of the

species. Enduring terrible privation, even, we learned to love the scenes of our sufferings. Never was that better exemplified than in these melancholy and maddening-atolls of the half-browned Archipelago.

CHAPTER IV

The copra market—Dangerous passage to shore at Kaukura—Our boat overturns in the pass—I narrowly escape death—Josephite Missionaries—The deadly nohu—The himene at night.

WORD we got at Anaa of a few tons of copra at Kaukura sent us hurrying there. The wind was against us, and we drew long sides of a triangle before we reached that atoll, which was, as our starting-point, at the base of the isosceles. Kaukura was a divergence from our intended course, but these schooners were like birds of the air, which must take their sustenance as fortune wills. Copra was scarce, and competition in buying, fierce. The natives received about four cents a pound, but as payment was usually in goods, the Tahiti traders, who shipped copra to America and Europe, profited heavily. There were grades in copra, owing to the carelessness of the natives in drying it. Green or poorly-dried nuts shrank, and the nuts parched in kilns developed more undesirable creosote than sun-dried. All copra was sold by weight and quality, and it continually lessened in weight by evaporation of oil. Time was the essence of a good bargain. The sooner to the presses of the mainland, the greater the return. Crude mills in the Paumotus or Tahiti crushed out the oil formerly, and it was sealed in bamboo lengths, and these exported. These tubes, air-tight, were common mediums of exchange, as wampum among Indians, or gold-dust in

Alaska. Modern processes extracted double the oil of the old presses, and the eight-foot sections of the long grass were almost obsolete for cocoanut-oil, and used mostly for sauces sold in the Papeete market-place.

"Trade ain't what it was," said McHenry. "There's more traders than natives, almost. I remember when they were so crazy to exchange our stuff for their produce, we 'd have the trade-room crowded all day, an' had to keep guns handy to chase the mob away, to add up the bloody figures. Now every atoll has its store, and the trader has to pat his copra-makers an' divers on the back, instead o' kickin' them the way we used to. The damn Frogs treat these Kanakas like they were white people, an' have spoiled our game. We can't trade in the Paumotus unless the schooner has a French registry and a French captain,—Lyin' Bill is a Frog citizen for not stealin' a vessel he had a chance to,—an' when you leave the Papeete you 've got to register every last drop o' booze you 've got aboard. It 's supposed to be only for us on the schooner, and for the whites in the Paumotus, or a few chieves who have permits, for bein' Froggy. But it 's the rotten missionaries who hurt us, really. We could smuggle it in, but they tell on us."

We had not caught a fish from the schooner, despite having a tackle rigged most of the days. I had fixed a bamboo rod, about eighteen feet long and very strong, on the rail of the waist of the vessel, and from it let trail a hundred feet or so of tough line. The hook was the most perfect for the purpose ever made by man. It was cut out of the mother-of-pearl lining of the Paumotuan pearl-oyster shell. It was about six inches

long, and three quarters wide, shaped rudely like a flying-fish, and attached to it on the concave side was a barb of bone about an inch and a half in length, fastened with *purau* fiber, and a few hog's bristles inserted. The line was roved through the hole where the barb was fastened, and, being braided along the inner side of the pearl shank, was tied again at the top, forming a chord to the arch. Unbaited, the hook, by the pull of the schooner, skipped along the surface of the sea like a flying-fish. I had made a telltale of a piece of stick, and while McHenry and I talked and Jean Moet slept it snapped before my eyes. To seize the rod and hold on was the act of a second. I let out the entire five hundred feet of line, before the fish tired, and then it took four of us to drag him to the deck. He was a *roroa,* a kind of barracuda, about ten feet long, and weighing a couple of hundred pounds.

The fish made a welcome change in our diet and was enough for all, including a number of Paumotuans who were returning to Takaroa for the opening of the diving season. Chocolat nibbled a head, but preferred the remnants of a can of beef. He improved daily in his tricks and in his agility in avoiding being hurtled into the water by the roll or pitch of the schooner. He had an almost incredible instinct or acquired knowledge of the motion of the *Marara,* and when I felt sure we had lost him—that he would fall overboard in another instant—he would leap to the deck and frolic about the wheel. The spokes of it were another constant threat to his health, for one blow when they spun fast might kill him; but he was reserved for a more horrid fate.

Kaukura rose from the sea at dawn, after a night of wearing and tacking. It was an atoll, irregularly annular in shape, twenty-six miles long and ten wide, wooded in patches, and with vast stretches where only the dazzling coral shone. It, too, had been spoiled in prosperity by an inimical wind and tide, and the cocoa-palms had been annihilated that had once grown upon all its many component islets. The cocoanut-tree lives more than eighty years, and does not fruit until seven years old, so that the loss of thousands of these life-giving palms was a fearful blow. Each tree bore a hundred nuts annually, and that crop was worth to the owner for copra nearly a dollar, besides being much of his food.

Landmarks we gradually discerned; a village, two churches, and a row of houses, and then the French tricolor on a pole. The surf broke with a fierce roaring on the reef, and when McHenry and I left the schooner, Moet stayed aboard, as the wind was ominous. There was no pass into the lagoon at this village, and even the pit in the barrier-reef had been made by French engineers. They had blown up the madrepore rock, and made a gateway for small boats.

The schooner did not take our painter, for the breeze was too stiff for the venture, and so we had a half-mile to row. When we neared the reef and entered the pit, I felt that it was touch-and-go, for we rose and tottered on the huge swells, and dived into their hollows, with a prophetic certainty of capsizing. I could hardly keep on the box under me, and swayed forebodingly. Then suddenly the steering oar caught under a bank of coral. I barely heard the cry of Piri a Tuahine,

"E era! There she goes!" when the boat rose on its stern with a twisting motion, as if a whale had struck it with its fluke, and turned turtle. I was slighted into the water at is topmost teeter, falling yards away from it, and in the air I seemed to see the Tahitians leaping for safety from its crushing thwarts and the cargo.

McHenry's "What the bloody —— !" as we both somersaulted, was in my ears as I was plunged beneath the surface.

With the fear of encountering the boat, the dark bulk of which I saw dimly above me, I swam hard under the water a dozen strokes, and rose to find myself beneath the reef, which grew in broken ledges. When my head in stunning contact with the rock knelled a warning to my brain, I opened my eyes. There was only blackness. I dived again, a strange terror chilling me, but when I came up, I was still penned from air in abysmal darkness.

Now fear struck me weak. I realized my extraordinary peril, a peril glimpsed in nightmares. I had penetrated fifteen or twenty feet under the ledge, and I had no sense of direction of the edge of the coral. My distance from it was considerable; I knew by the invisible gloom. With a fleeting recollection of camera films in my shirt pocket, came the choking dread of suffocation, and death in this labyrinth.

I supposed I invoked God and his Son to save me. Probably in my agony I promised big things to them and humanity if I survived. I kept my eyes open and struck out. After swimming a few yards I felt the coral shelving inwardly. I realized that I had gone

farther from my only goal of life. I felt the end was close, but still in desperation moved my limbs vigorously.

Then I felt the water lashing about me. Something seized my arm. Shark stories leaped from my memory's cold storage to my very soul. My blood was an icy stream from head to toes. Singular to relate, I was aware of a profound regret for my murders of many sharks—who, after all, I reasoned with an atavistic impulse of propitiation, were but working out the wise plan of the Creator. But the animal that grasped my arm did not bite. It held me firmly, and dragged me out from that murky hell, until in a few seconds the light, God's eldest and loveliest daughter, appeared faintly, and then, bright as lightning, and all of a sudden, I was in the center of the sun, my mouth open at last, my chest heaving, my heart pumping madly, and my head bursting with pain. I was in the arms of Piri a Tuahine, who, as all the other Tahitians, had swum under the reef in search of me.

In the two or three minutes—or that half-hour—during which I had been breathless, the sailors had recaptured the boat and were righting it, the oars still fastened to the gunwales. I was glad to be hauled into the empty boat, along with McHenry, who was sputtering and cursing.

"Gorbli-me!" he said, as he spat out salt water, "you made a bloody fool o' yerself doin' that! Why did n't ye look how I handled meself? But I lost a half-pound of tobacco by that christenin'."

I was laid down on the cargoless seats, and the men

rowed through the moat, smiling at me with a worthy sense of superiority, while McHenry dug the soaked tobacco out of his trousers pocket.

"Ye can always trust the Kanaka to get ye out o' the water if ye capsize," said he, artfully. "We 've taught him to think o' the white man first. He damn well knows where he 'd get off, otherwise."

A hundred feet farther, we came to a spit of rocks, which stopped progress. A swarm of naked children were playing about it. Assisted by the Tahitians I was lifted to my feet, and, with McHenry, continued to the sand.

There I took stock of my physical self. I was battered and bruised, but no bones were broken. My shins were scraped and my entire body bleeding as if a sharp steel comb had raked me. My head was bloody, but my skull without a hole in it, or even marked depression, except my usual one where phrenologists locate the bump of reverence. I was sick at my stomach, and my legs bent under me. I knew that I would be as well as ever soon, unless poisoned, but would bear the marks of the coral. All these white men who journeyed about the Paumotus bore indelible scars of coral wound.

My friend, the poet, Rupert Brooke, had been made very ill by coral poisoning. He wrote from the Tiare Hotel in Papeete: "I've got some beastly coral-poisoning into my legs, and a local microbe on top of that, and made the places worse by neglecting them, and sea-bathing all day, which turns out to be the worst possible thing. I was in the country, at Mataiea, when it came on bad, and tried native remedies, which took all the

The road from the beach

An American Josephite missionary and his wife, and their church

skin off, and produced such a ghastly appearance that I hurried into town. I 've got over it now and feel spry." His nickname, *Pupure,* meant leprous, as well as fair, and was a joking *double entendre* by the natives.

I was later, in the Marquesas, to see a man die of such poison received in the Paumotus. But, in Kaukura, I had to make the best of it, and after a short rest began to see the sights. There was a crowd of people about, men and women, and still more children, all lighter than the Paumotuans in complexion and stouter in body. They were dressed up. The men were in denim trousers and shirts, and some with the stiff white atrocities suffered by urbanites in America and Europe. The women wore the conventional nightgowns that Christian propriety of the early nineteenth century had pulled over their heads. They were not the spacious *holokus* of Hawaii. These single garments fitted the portly women on the beach as the skin of a banana its pulpy body—and between me and the sun hid nothing of their roly-poly forms. I recognized the *ahu vahine* of Tahiti.

"Ia ora na i te Atua!" the people greeted me, with winning smiles. "God be with you!" was its meaning, and their accent confirmed their clothing. They were Tahitians. I spoke to them, and they commiserated my sad appearance, and pointed out a tall young white man who came striding down the beach, his mouth pursed in an anxious question as he saw me.

"Got any medicine on that hay wagon?" he asked. "We 've got a bunch of dysentery here."

I knew at once by his voice issuing through his nostrils instead of his mouth, and by the sharp cut of his

jib, that he was my countryman, and from the Middle West. He had the self-satisfied air of a Kansan.

"The trade-room of the *Marara* is full of medical discoveries, perunas, Jamaica ginger, celery compounds, and other hot stuff," I replied, "but what they 'll cure I don't know. We have divers patent poisons known to prohibition."

"That 's all rotten booze. My people don't use the devilish stuff," he commented, caustically. He continued on, wading to the boat, and, after a parley, proceeding with it to the schooner.

McHenry had half determined to plant himself, at least temporarily, in Kaukura, and left me to spy on the store of a Chinese, who had brought a stock of goods from Papeete. I walked toward an enormous thatched roof, under which, on the coral strand, were nearly a thousand persons. The pungent smoke from a hundred small fires of cocoanut husks gave an agreeable tang to the air; the lumps of coral between which they were kindled were red with the heat, the odors rose from bubbling pots. All the small equipment of Tahitian travelers was strewn about. Upon mattresses and mats in the shed, the sides of which were built up several feet to prevent the intrusion of pigs and dogs, lay old people and children, who had not finished their slumbers. Stands for the sale of fruits, ice, confections, soda-water, sauces, and other ministrants to hunger and habit bespoke the acquired tastes of the Tahitians; but most of the people were of Kaukura and other atolls.

Kaukura alone had nearly a thousand inhabitants. Its lagoons were the richest in pearl of all the group. Being one of the nearest of the Paumotus to Tahiti,

it had been much affected by the proselytizing and commercializing spirits of that island—spirits often at variance but now and again joined, as on a greater scale trust magnates capitalize and direct missions and religious institutions with the left hand, while their right takes toll of life-killing mill and mine.

The village was as attractive as a settlement could be in these benighted islands, the houses stretching along one or two roads, some in gala color. A small, sprightly white man was donning shirt and trousers on the veranda of the best residence at the end of the street. He was about forty years old, with a curiously keen face, a quick movement, and an eye like an electric light through a keyhole.

"Hello," he said, briskly, "by golly, you 're not an American, are you? I 'm getting my pants on a little late. We were up all hours last night, but I flatter myself God was glad of it. Kidd 's my name; Johnny Kidd, they call me in Lamoni. I 'm glad to meet you, Mr. —— ?"

"O'Brien, Frederick O'Brien, of almost anywhere, except Lamoni," I replied, laughingly, his good-natured enthusiasm being infectious.

He looked at me, inquiringly.

"Not in my line, are you?" he asked, with an appraising survey of me.

My head bleeding and aching, my body quivering with the biting pain of its abraded surface, I still surrendered to the irony of the question. I guessed that he was a clergyman from his possessive attitude toward God, but he was so simple and natural in manner, with so little of a clerical tone or gesture, that I would

have thought him a street-faker or professional gambler had I had no clue to his identity. I remembered, too, the oft-quoted: "In my Father's house are many mansions."

"I 'm merely a beach-comber," I assured him. "I take a few notes now and then."

"Oh, you 're not a sky-pilot," he went on, in comic relief. "You never can tell. Those four-flushing Mormons have been bringing a whole gang of young elders from Utah to Tahiti to beat us out. I 'm an elder myself of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They usually call us the Josephites. In these islands we are Konito or Tonito. We 've been having a grand annual meeting here. Over sixty from Tahiti, and altogether a thousand and seventy members. They 've been gathering from most of the Paumotus for weeks, coming with the wind, but we 're about over now."

"But I thought the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was the Mormons," said I, puzzled.

"Mormon!" There was such vigor in his explosive catching up of my query that I may well be pardoned if I thought he placed the common name for Sheol after that of the sect. But it stands to reason that he did not. His whole training would stop such a word ere it escaped him.

"Mormon! I should say not! Those grafters and polygamists are not our kind. They stole our name. We were the same until Brigham Young split off and led his crowd to Utah. Our headquarters is at Lamoni, Iowa, but I. N. Imbel, who 's gone to the schooner, my partner, and I are the missionaries in these

islands. We 're properly authorized ministers who make this our regular and whole business. My pal and I live in Papeete, but run through the Paumotus when there 's anything doing."

The reverend fellow had no airs about him.

"Sit down and take off your clothes and dry them, and I 'll rub your cuts with some liniment," he invited. "They 'll dry in the sun, and here 's a *pareu* to slip over you. I 'd like to tell you more about our work, so 's you won't mix us up with those Mormons. They 're a tough bunch. My father 's the head of our mission in England, and I 'm in charge of these islands. Every year we have a business meeting. That 's what this is; not a revival. We don't believe in that emotion game. We call it a 'reasonable service.' We take up a collection, of course. We invite the natives to investigate our claims. We have the custom to get converts by debating with the Mormons, but after we had accepted a challenge to meet them in Papeete the French governor stopped the show, because a French law forbade such meetings. They used to have riots in France, it seems. The Mormons teach polygamy and other abominations. They 'll tell you they don't, but they do. You ask any Mormon native if he believes in plural wives, and he 'll say yes, that the elders from America teach that it 's right. Those Mormons ran away from here once, when the French government scared them, and we got in and had most of the natives in the Paumotus that the Catholics had n't kept. Then when the Mormons saw there was no danger, they came back here from Salt Lake. Oh, they 're a bad outfit. We 're regularly ordained ministers, not farmers off on

a lark. This temple here cost a thousand dollars, without the labor. That was all voluntary. Wait a minute!"

He dashed into a room, and returned with a pamphlet which purported to be the findings of the Court of Lake County, Ohio, and he read from it a decree that the Utah Mormons were a fragment and split off from the real simon-pure religion established by Joseph Smith in New York. I wished that Stevenson had been there to hear him, for I remembered his page of bewilderment at the enigma of the *"Kanitu"* and *Mormoni* in the Paumotus, and how he made comparisons of the Holy Willies of Scotland, and a New Guinea god named Kanitu. His uninquiring mind had not solved the problem.

"We beat those wolves in sheep's clothing in this court," said Elder Kidd, animatedly. "We 're the real church, and the Brighamites are a hollow sham."

Mr. Kidd engaged my interest, true or pseudo-disciple of Joseph Smith. He was so human, so guileful, and had such an engaging smile and wink. He seemed to feel that he was in a soul-saving business thoroughly respectable, yet needing to be explained and defended to the Gentile. His competitors' incompetency he deemed worthy of emphasis.

"Not long ago," he said, "in certain of these Paumotus there had been a good deal of backsliding from our church. Nobody had stirred them up, and with these people you have got to keep their souls awake all the time or they 'll go to sleep, or, worse, get into the control of those Mormons. They 'll steal a convert like you 'd peel a banana, and that 's what I call the limit

of a dirty trick. The Mormons thought they had a puddin' in these backsliders to pull them over to their side. I heard about it, and without a word to any one I took a run through the group. I went through that crowd of backsliders with a spiritual club, and I not only redeemed the old Josephites, but I baptized seventy-five others before you could run a launch from here to Anaa. It was like stealin' persimmons from a blind farmer whose dog is chained. I was talkin' to the head Mormon in Papeete shortly afterward, and he asked me what we were doin'. I counted off the seventy-five new ones, and he had to acknowledge his church had n't made a count in a long time. I offered to bet him anything he was beat to a finish, but he quit cold."

The Reverend Mr. Kidd excused himself to go to the meeting-house and get his breakfast with some of his deacons. McHenry had returned from his tour of espionage. He was cast down at the poor chance for business.

"There 's nothing doin'," he said. "Twenty years ago I was here with a schooner o' booze to a Konito meetin' like this. There was kegs o' rum with bloody tops knocked in right in the road. An' wimmin'! You 'd a-gone nuts tryin' to choose. This is what religi'n does to business. A couple o' bleedin' chinks sellin' a few bottles o' smell water, an' a lot o' Tahitians with fruit an' picnic stuff. A thousand Kanakas in one bunch an' not one drunk. By cripes, the mishes have ruined the trade. The American Government ought to interfere. You and me had better skin out to west-'ard where there ain't so many bloody preachers, an'

you can handle the Kanaka the way you want. To-night this mob 'll be in that meetin'-house singin' their heads off, instead o' buyin' rum and dancin' like they used to. Them two sky-pilots has got all the francs. Even the Chinks has n't made a turn. Kopcke of Papeete is here an' ain't made a sou. He 's goin'-a go to leeward."

"McHenry," I interrogated, "do you never consider the other fellow? Are n't these poor people better off chanting hymns and praying than getting drunk and dancing the hula, just to make you money."

He regarded me with contemptuous malice.

"I knew after all you were a bloody missionary," he said, acridly. "I been on to you. You 'll be in that straw shed to-night singin' 'Come to Jesus.' You 'd better look out after your cuts! You 'll be sore 'n a boil to-morrow when they get stiff. Let 's go back to the schooner and get drunk!"

I was tempted to return to the *Marara* to ease my misery, and only the promise of Elder Kidd to assuage it with liniment, and an ardent desire to attend the Josephite services that night, detained me in the heat of the atoll. McHenry persisting in his decision to cool his coppers in rum, and I to see everything of Kaukura, I joined with a friendly native for a stroll. The Josephite temple was a small coral edifice, washed white with coral lime. An old and uncared-for Catholic church was near-by. Most of the residences were thatched huts, or shacks made of pieces of boxes and tin and corrugated iron, with a few formal wooden cottages, painted red, white, and blue. They were very

poor, these Kaukurans, from our point of view, earning barely enough to sustain them in strength, and with few comforts in their huts, except the universal sewing-machine. Everywhere that was the first ambition of the uncivilized woman roused to modern vanities, as of the poor woman in all countries.

Walking along the beach I narrowly escaped a more serious accident than the disaster of the reef, for only the warning of my companion stayed me from treading upon a *nohu,* the deadliest underfoot danger of the Paumotus. It was a fish peculiarly hateful to humans, yet gifted by nature with both defensive disguise and offensive weapons, a remnant of the fierce struggle for survival in which so many forms of life had disappeared or altered in changing environment. The *nohu* lay on the coral strand where the tide lapped it, looking the twin of a battered, mossy rock, so deceiving that one must have the sight of the aborigine to avoid stepping upon it, if in one's way. Put a foot on it, and before one could move, the *nohu* raised the bony spines of its dorsal fin and pierced one's flesh as would a row of hatpins; not only pierced, but simultaneously injected through its spines a virulent poison that lay at the base of a malevolent gland. The *nohu* possessed a protective coloring and shape more deluding than any other noxious creature I know, and kept its mouth shut except when it swallowed the prey for which it lay in wait. Its mouth is very large, and a brilliant lemon-color inside, so that if it parts its lips it betrays itself. Brother to the *nohu* in evil purpose is the *tataraihau.* But what a trickster is nature! The *nohu* is as ugly

as a squid, and the *tataraihau* beautiful as a piece of the sunset, a brilliant red, with transverse bands of chocolate, bordered with ebony.

"If you can spit on the *nohu* before he sticks his *taetae* into you, it will not poison you," sagely said my savior, as he stabbed the wretch with his knife.

Pliny, as translated by Holland, said:

> All men carry about them that which is poyson to serpents: for if it be true that is reported, they will no better abide the touching with man's spittle than scalding water cast upon them: but if it happen to light within their chawes or mouth, especially if it comes from a man that is fasting, it is present death.

Pliny in his day may have known of quick-witted people who, when assailed by a snake, had presence of mind to expectorate in his chawes, but the most hungry, salivary man could hardly avail himself of this prophylactic unless he recognized the *nohu* before treading upon him. The Paumotuans employ the *mape,* the native chestnut, the *atae, ape,* and *rea moeruru.* These are all "yarb" remedies, and the first, the juice of the chestnut, squeezed on the head and neck, they swear by. The French doctors advise morphine injection or laudanum externally, or to suck the wound and cup it. Coagulating the poison *in situ* by alcohol, acids, or caustic alkali, or the use of turpentine, is also recommended. If the venom is not speedily drawn out or nullified, the feet of the victim turn black and coma ensues. The French called the *nohu, La Mort,* The Death.

My Paumotuan friend and Elder Kidd together gave me this information, and when we brought the *nohu* to the house in which he lived the clergyman said we would

eat it. The native heated an old iron pipe and, after flaying the skin off the fish, boiled it. The flesh was remarkably sweet and tender.

I lay on a mat, and, after the American had laved me with the liniment, the Paumotuan, a Konito elder, massaged me for an hour, during which grievous process I fell asleep, and woke after dark when the "reasonable service" was beginning.

The people were ranged under the immense roof in orderly ranks, the Tahitians being in one knot. Both the American elders were upon a platform, surrounded by the native elders, who aided in the conduct of the program, which was in Paumotuan. The Paumotuan language is a dialect closely allied to the Maori, which includes the Tahitian, Hawaiian, Marquesan, New Zealand, Samoan, and other island tongues. The Paumotuan was crossed with a strange tongue, the origin of which was not fixed, but which might be the remains of an Aino or negroid race found in the Paumotus by the first Polynesian immigrants. Tahitians easily understood the Paumotuans, though many words were different, and there were many variations in pronunciation and usage. The Tahitians had been living closely with Europeans for a hundred years, and their language had become a mere shadow of its past form. The Paumotuan had remained more primitive, for the Paumotuan was a savage when the Tahitians were the most cultivated race of the South Seas; not with a culture of our kind, but yet with elaborated ceremonials, religious and civil, ranks of nobility, drama, oratory, and wit.

It being the conclusion of the grand annual meeting

of the Josephites, a summing up of the business condition of the sect in these waters was the principal item. Elders Kidd and Imbel stressed dependence of the Almighty upon his apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors, and of these called-of-God men upon the francs collected at such gatherings as this.

Both the divines spoke earnestly, and mentioned Jehovah and Joseph Smith many times, with Aarona, Timoteo, Pauro, and other figures from the Scriptures. They struck the pulpit when they spoke of the *Mormoni,* and the faces of the congregation took on expressions of holy disdain.

Somewhat like the modern preacher of the larger cities, the elders strove to entertain as well as instruct, edify, and command their flock. They proposed a charade or riddle, which they said was of very ancient origin, and perhaps had been told in the time of the Master's sojourn among men. They spoke it very slowly and carefully and repeated it several times, so that it was thoroughly understood by all:

He walked on earth,
He talked on earth,
He reproved man for his sin;
He is not in earth,
He is not in heaven,
Nor can he enter therein.

This mysterious person was written about in the Bible, said Elder Kidd.

Aue! That was a puzzler! Who could it be? Many scratched their heads. Others shook theirs despairingly. A few older men, of the diaconate, prob-

ably, smiled knowingly. Some began to eliminate likely biblical characters on their fingers. Iesu-Kirito, Aberahama, Ioba, Petero, and so on through a list of the more prominent notables of Scripture. But after five minutes of guesses, which were pointed out by Mr. Kidd not to comply with the specifications of the charade, the answer was announced with impressive unction:

"Asini Balaama."

Balaam's ass. *Aue!* Why, of course. I had named to myself every *persona dramatis* of the Book I could recall, but the talkative steed had escaped me. We all laughed. Most of the congregation had never seen an ass or even a horse, and the word itself was pulled into their language by the ears. But they could conjure up a life-like picture of the scene from their pastor's description, and there were many interchanges between neighbors about the wisdom of the beast, and his kindness in saving Balaam from the angry angel who would have killed him.

But in time the prose part of the service came to an end, and the singing began. I moved myself to the shadows outside the pale, and stretching at full length on a mat on the sand, gave myself to the rapture of their poetry, and the waking dreams it brought.

Himene, all mass singing was called in these islands —the missionary hymn Polynesianized. They had only chants when the whites came; proud recitatives of valor in war, of the beginnings of creation, of the wanderings of their heroes, challenges to the foe, and prayers to the mysterious gods and demons of their supernal regions. They learned awedly the hymns of Christian-

ity, and struggled decades with the airs. Confused with these were songs of the white sailors, the spirited bowline and windlass chanteys of the British and American tars, the trivial or obscene lays of beach-combers and soldiers, and later the popular tunes of nations and governments. Out of all these the Polynesians had evolved their *himenes,* singing as different from any ever heard in Europe or America as the bagpipe from the violin, but never to be forgotten when once heard to advantage, for its barbaric call, its poignancy of utterance, and its marvelous harmony.

In the great shed outside which I lay under the purple sky, the men and women were divided, and the women led the *himene.* One began a wail, a high note, almost a shriek, like the keening of a wake, and carrying but a phrase. Others met her voice at an exact interval, and formed a chorus, into which men and women entered, apparently at will, but each with a perfect observance of time, so that the result was an overwhelming symphony of vocal sounds which had in them the power of a pipe-organ to evoke thought. I heard the cry of sea-birds, the crash of the waves on the reef, the thrashing of the giant fronds of the cocoa-palms, the groans of afflicted humans, and the pæans of victory of embattled warriors. The effect was incredibly individual. Each white heard the *himene* differently, according to his own cosmos.

There under the stars on Kaukura, cast down and conscious as I had been of my trivial hurts, and of a certain loneliness of situation, I forgot all in the thrill of emotion caused by the exquisite though unstudied art of

these simple Josephites, worshipers, whose voices pierced my heart with the sorrows and aspirations of an occult world. The Reverends Kidd and Imbel were forgotten, and all but the mysterious conflict of man with his soul. I fell asleep as the *himene* went on for hours, and was awakened by Kopcke, the trader, who said that the *Marara* was to sail at midnight, and that he had been asked to bring me aboard.

Chocolat barked a welcome from the taffrail as we boarded the schooner, and with the offshore wind we welcomed I could hear a faint human noise which I interpreted as the benediction of the Reverend Johnny Kidd.

CHAPTER V

Captain Moet tells of Mapuhi, the great Paumotuan—Kopcke tells about women—Virginie's jealousy—An affrighting waterspout—The wrecked ship—Landing at Takaroa.

"*MAINTENANT,*" said Captain Moet, as he gave orders for the course, "we weel veesit ze king ov ze Paumotu. Monsieur O'Breeon, 'e got no nose, bot 'e ees *magnifique.* 'E like out ov ze story-book. Ze bigges' tradaire, ze bes' divaire, ze *bon père* ov ze Paumotu. An' 'e ees reech, eef 'e don' geeve 'way ev'rysing. Nevaire 'ave I know one *hombre* like 'eem!"

"He 's lost his grip since he got old," McHenry interrupted, in his contrary way. "They say he 's got a million francs out in bad accounts to natives. He 's rotten easy, and spoils trade for a decent white man, by cripes!"

"Nom d'une pipe!" cried the Marseillais. "Mac, you nevaire see anysing nice. 'E ees not easy; 'e ees not rotten. 'E 'as got old, an' *maintenant,* 'e ees 'fraid ov ze devil, ze *diablo malo.* Mac, eef you waire so nice as Mapuhi, I geeve you wan hug an' kees. 'E ees 'onnes', Mac, *vous savez!* Mapuhi say somesing, eet ees true. Zat bad for you, eh?"

Mapuhi! In Tahiti, among the Paumotu traders at the Cercle Bougainville, his name was every-day mention. He was the outstanding figure of the Paumatuan race. Lying Bill had narrated a dozen stories about

Photo by Brooks Bros.

Typical and primitive native hut, Paumotu Archipelago

Copra drying

him over our glasses, and Goeltz, Hallman, all the skippers and supercargos, had spoken of him.

"Mapuhi 's som'mat for looks without 'is nose," said Captain Pincher. "I 've known 'im thirty years, an' 'e 's the biggest man in the group in all that time. 'E 's got Mormonism stronger now, an' 'e 's bloody well afraid of 'ell, the 'ell those Mormon missionaries tell about; but 'e 's the best navigator in these waters."

"He 's past eighty now, big-hearted but shrewd, and loving his own people," said Woronick, the Parisian, and cunningest of Tahiti pearl merchants, except Levy. "He 's gone on Mormonism, but he 's smart with all his religion. The trouble is he 's let charity run away with business principles, and divers and others get into him for hundreds of thousands of francs. I 'd take his word for anything, and you know me! They did n't keep me out of the United States because I 'm a dummy, *hein?*"

"He 's a remarkable man, this Kanaka," joined in Winnie Brander, master of a sieve of a schooner, as he drank his Doctor Funk. "When he was a boy he was a savage. His father ate his enemies. For fifty years Mapuhi has been sailing schooners in the Paumotus. He 's the richest man there, and the best skipper in these waters that ever weathered the New Year gales. I 'm captain of a schooner and I have sailed the Group since a boy, but, matching my experience against his,—and I have n't had a tenth of his,—Mapuhi knows more by instinct of weather, of reefs, of passes, and of seamanship than I have learned. He 's known from Samoa to Tahiti as a wizard for sailing. He knows every one of the eighty Paumotus by sight. Wake him up any-

where in the Group in sight of land, and he 'll take a squint and tell where they are. God knows that 's the hardest bit of spying there is, because these atolls are mostly all alike at a distance—just a few specks of green, then a bunch of palms, and a line of coral. It 's something uncanny the way this fellow can locate himself. They say he can tell them at night by the smell."

" 'E 's a bloody Rockefeller down 'ere," Lying Bill took up the story. " 'E 's combed this 'ere 'ole ocean. I remember when 'e lost the *Tavaroa* 'e 'ad built by Matthew Turner in California, and four other schooners, in the cyclone of 1906. Many a boat 'e built 'imself. 'E was the devil for women, with the pick of the group an' 'im owin' 'alf the families in debt. Then the Mormons got a 'olt of 'im, an' 'e began prayin' an' preachin', and stuck by 'is proper wife. You 'll see that big church, if you go to Takaroa, 'e built, an' where 'is ol' woman is buried."

And now I was bound for the atoll of this mighty chief of his tribe, and was to see him face to face. From Kaukura, the *Marara* raced and lagged by turn. The glass fell, and I spoke to McHenry about it, pointing to the recording barometer.

"There 's trouble comin'," he said, testily. "I know that. I don't need any barometer. We South Sea men have got enough mercury in us to tell the weather without any barometer."

The rain fell at intervals, but not hard enough for a bath on deck, the prized weather incident of these parts. With no fresh water in Niau, Anaa, or Kaukura, or not enough for bathing, and with only a dole

on the *Marara* for hands and faces, I, with remembrance of Rupert Brooke's complaint about the effect of sea-water on coral wounds, was about half-crazy for a torrential shower. But the rain passed, and the sunset soothed my sorrow. Never had I known such skies. In this heaven's prism were hues not before seen by me. Manila, I had thought, was of all the world apart for the beauty and brilliancy of its sunsets. Such bepainted clouds as hung over the hill of Mariveles when I rode down the Malecon in the days of the Empire! But Manila was here surpassed in startling shape and blazing color.

A great bank of ocher held the western sky—a perfect curtain for a stage upon which gods might enact the fall of the angels. It depended in folds and fringes over stripes of gold—a startling, magnificent design which appeared too regular in form and color to be accident of clouds. One had to remember the bits of glass in the kaleidoscope.

The gold grew red, the stripes became a sheet of scarlet, and that vermilion and maroon, swiftly changing as deeper dipped the sun into the sea, until the entire sky was broken into mammoth fleecy white tiles, the tesselated ceiling of Olympus. The canopy grew gray, and night dropped abruptly. A wind came out of the darkness and caught the *Marara* under full canvas. It drove her through the fast-building waves at eleven knots. The hull groaned in tune with the shrieking cordage. The timbers that were long from the forest, and had fought a thousand gales, lamented their age in moans and whines, in grindings and fierce blows. The white water piled over the bows, deluged the deck,

and foamed on the barrier of the cabin rise. I stripped and went forward to meet it. I could have danced in it for joy. Oh! the joy of sail! Steam and motor made swift the path of the ship, but they had in them no consonance with nature. They were blind and deaf to the wind and wave, which were the very life of the schooner. They brought no sense of participation in speed as did the white wings of the *Marara,* nor of kinship with the main. They were alive, those swelling and careening sheets of canvas, that swung to and fro with the mind of the breeze, and cried and laughed in stress of labor.

The rain blanketed the ocean, the vessel heeled over to starboard until her rail was salty, the jibs pleaded for relief, but man was implacable. For hours we held our course, driving fast in the obscure night toward the home of the wondrous diver, the man without a nose, Mapuhi, the uncrowned king of the Dangerous Isles.

But when the moon lit the road to Takaroa, she lulled the wind. The eleven knots fell to seven, and to five, and at midnight we drifted in a zephyr.

When I went below in a light squall, sure sign of near-by land, Kopcke, the handsome trader, and a native girl were asleep on a mat in the passageway beside and partly under my bunk. I had to step over them. Her red tunic was drawn up over her limbs in her restless slumber, and a sheet covered closely her head. He lay on his back, his eyes facing the cabin lamp, his breathing that of a happy child after a day of hard play. As a matter of fact he had drunk a half dozen tots of rum since he had brought me aboard.

Kopcke had failed at Kaukura, and like McHenry

was bound for Takaroa, to set up a store for the diving season. He was a ne'er-do-well who existed without hard work merely because of familiarity with the people and languages of the islands. After a few glasses on board he had spilled his affairs to me, and especially his amorous adventures, in the boasting way of his kind. "Mary pity women!" A quarter-Tahitian, his father a European, and his mother French Tahitian, he was remarkably good-looking, in the style of a cinema idol. He had first married the half-caste daughter of Lying Bill, one of the many children of that Bedouin of the Pacific, who, in more than three decades of roaming the islands, had, according to his brag, scores of descendants. She had died, and Kopcke had left their child to charity, and taken up with another whom he had deserted after a year, leaving her their new-born infant.

"She would not obey me," Kopcke explained to Virginie and me. "I was good to her, but she was obstinate, and I had to send her to Takepoto. She had a good thing but could not appreciate me. I then took this girl here, whose father is an old diver in Takaroa, with a good deal of money. He once picked up a single pearl worth a big fortune. She is sixteen, and is easily managed. You 've got to get them young, *mon ami,* to learn your ways. That Takepoto girl feels sorry now. Women are queer, all of them, *mon vieux, n'est-ce pas?"*

Virginie was all Huguenot French blood though born in Tahiti, and Kopcke went against her puritan grain. She thought him a bad example for her Jean, who, though as devoted a husband as seaman, was danger-

ously attractive to the native girls. Moet could *tutoyer* them in their own tongue, with a roughish but alluring manner toward them that, though it crowded the trade-room of the *Marara* with customers for finery and cologne water, tortured Virginie. His endearing terms, his gentle slaps on their hips, and momentary arm about their waists, rended Virginie between jealousy and profits.

"Mais," Jean would exclaim, after an interchange of bitter words, in which *cochon* had been applied to him, "how zat *femme* zink I do bees'ness. Wiz kicks 'an go-to-'ells? She count ze money wiz *plaisir,* bot Jean Moet, 'er 'usbin', 'e mos' be like wan mutton. 'Sus Maria! I will make show 'oo ees boss!"

Kopcke was rather more honest in his dealings with women than the white men. His quarter-native strain made him less ruthless, and more understanding of them. The ordinary European or American in the South Seas had not his own home's standards in such affairs. He released himself with a prideful assertiveness from such restraints, and went to an opposite ethic in his breaking of the chain. His usual attitude to women here was that of the average man toward domesticated animals—to pet and feed them, and to abuse them when disobedient or at whim.

Of course, the white flotsam and jetsam of humanity in these islands, who in their own countries had probably starved for caresses, and who may never have known women other than the frowzy boughten ones of the cabaret and brothel, were here giving back to the sex what it had bestowed on them in more formalized circles. The soft, loving women of Polynesia paid for

the sex starvation enforced by economic conditions among the superior whites. A feast brought the ingratitude of the beggar.

All day, with half a gale, we sailed past atolls and bare reefs, groves of palms and rudest rocks, primal strata and beaches of softest and whitest sand. The schooner went close to these islands, so that it appeared I could throw my hat upon them; but distances here were deceptive, and I suppose we were never less than a thousand feet away. Yet we were near enough to hear the smash of the surf and to see the big fish leap in the lagoon, to drink the intoxicating draft of oneness with the lonely places, and to feel the secrets of their isolation. I was happy that before I died I had again seen the Thing I had worshipped since I began to read.

I slipped off the coat of years and was a boy on a pirate schooner, my hand on Long Tom, the brass gun, ready to fire if the cannibals pushed nearer in their canoes. Again I had trained my hand and eye so that I brought down the wild pigeon with my sling, and I outran the furious turtle on the beach. I dived under the reef into the cave where the freebooters had stored their ill-gotten treasure, and reveled in the bags of pieces of eight, and the bars of virgin gold. I thought of *Silver,* and sang:

"Fifteen men on the Dead Man's Chest—
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!"

"Mais vous êtes gai," said Jean Moet. *"Qu'est cela?* You not drink wan bottle when I no look?"

At three o'clock in the afternoon the gale had almost died away. The sun was struggling to break through

the lowering sky. McHenry and Kopcke were engaged in their usual bombast of personal achievement with women and drink, and I, to shut out their *blague,* was playing with Chocolat. Suddenly Kopcke broke off in a sentence and shouted to Moet, who was in the trade-room.

"Capitaine! Capitaine!" he called loudly through the window of the cabin. "There is a flood in air. *Puahiohio!* On deck! On deck!"

His voice vibrated with alarm, and Moet made three jumps and was at the wheel. He looked ahead, and I, too, saw, directly on the course we were steering, a convolute stem of water stretching from the sea to the sky. Well I knew what it was. I whirled McHenry around.

"Look!" I said, and pointed to the oncoming spectacle.

"A bloody waterspout!" yelled McHenry. "By cripes—here 's where we pay up!"

I heard the native passengers and the sailors forward shouting confusedly, and saw them throwing themselves flat on deck, where they held on to the hatch lashings and other stable objects. Moet, with a fierce oath, ordered the sailors to the halyards.

"Off with every stitch!" he commanded, as he threw the wheel hard over. *"Vave! Vave!"*

"Trombe!" he warned his wife, who was in the cabin with Kopcke's girl. "Hold on, Virginie, hold on! Pray, and be quick about it!"

McHenry, Kopcke, and I sprang to the main boom, and helped to take down the canvas and make it fast. The jibs were still standing, when the *Marara* turned

on her heel like a hare pursued by a hound. The waterspout was yet miles distant, but rushing toward us, as we made slow starboard progress from our previous wake. The daylight faded; the air seemed full of water. The sailors were again prone, and we, at the calm though sharp word of Moet, pulled over the companion cover. I shrank behind the house, and McHenry tucked his head into the bend of my body, while Kopcke, on his knees, held on to the traveler.

"*Sacramento!*" said Moet, as if to himself. "Maybe she no can meet zat!"

With pounding heart, but every sense alert, I watched the mad drive of the sable column. The *Marara* was now in smooth water,—the glassy circle of the *Puahiohio,*—and so near was the terrifying, twisting mass of dark foam and spindrift that it seemed impossible we could avoid it. Every inch the master, Moet alone stood up. Chocolat was huddled whimpering between his feet. I saw the captain pull up the straps that held the wheel when in light airs we drifted peacefully, and attach them so that the helm was fixed. There was a dreadful roaring a short way off and nearing every second. The spout was bigger than any of the great trees I had seen in the California forests, and from its base a leaden tower of hurrying water seemed to wind in a spiral stream to the clouds.

"She 's going to drop," said McHenry in my ear. "Now hold on, and we 'll see who comes out of the bloody wash!"

The roar was that of a blast-furnace, and so close, so fearful, I ceased to breathe. Captain Moet crouched by the steadfast wheel, his hand on the spokes. For-

ward, I saw two Tahitians with their palms upon their ears.

Suddenly the *Marara* heeled over. The starboard rail was in the water, and Kopcke, McHenry, and I, a tangled heap against the rail, as we struggled to keep our heads above the foam. Farther and farther the schooner listed. It was certain to me that we must meet death under it in another instant. Moet's feet were deep in the water, and now the wheel held him up. We clutched madly at the stanchions of the rail, as we choked with the salt flood.

Came the supreme moment. The waterspout rose above us on the port bow like a cliff, solid as stone. A million trumpets blew to me the call of Judgment Day. Then the wall of water passed by a hundred feet to port. In another breath the *Marara* regained her poise and was on an even keel. The peril was over.

"Mais, tonnère de Dieu!" cried Moet, excitedly, "zat was a *cochon* ov a watairespouse! Zere air many in zese latitude. Some time I see seex, seven, playin' 'round at wan time. I sink we make ze sail, and take wan drink queeck. Eh, Virginie, *ici! Donne-moi un baiser,* little cabbage! Deed you pray 'ard?"

Over his *petit verre,* the captain said to me, confidentially, *"Moi,* I was almos' become a *bon catholique* again."

Chocolat, who must have thought he had borne his part bravely in the crisis, frisked wildly about the wheel, risking his own brown hide at every leap, to testify his joy at his safety.

McHenry and Kopcke, with the heartening rum in their stomachs, resumed their palaver.

"That spout did n't come within fifty feet of us," said McHenry. "I 've seen one in which a bird was bein' carried up, whirlin' round and round, and not able to fly away. It was comin' toward us like lightnin' when I jumped into the shrouds with a big tin tub, an' banged it like bloody hell. It scared the spout away, an' it busted far enough from us not to hurt us. Bill an' Tommy Eustace can swear to that."

"Diable!" Kopcke broke in. "Mapuhi and his daughter were in a cutter coming from Takepoto when they were attacked by a *trombe.* It did not strike them but the force of it overturned their cutter, four miles from shore, and knocked the girl insensible, so that Mapuhi had to swim to shore with her."

They are fearsome spectacles at their best, these phenomena of the sea, comparable only in awe-inspiring qualities to the dread composants of St. Elmo's Fire, those apparitions of flame which appear on mastheads and booms on tempestuous nights, as if the spirits of hell had come to welcome the sailor to Davy Jones's locker. Waterspouts I had seen many times. They were common in these waters,—more frequent, perhaps, than anywhere else,—and to the native they were the most alarming manifestation of nature. Many a canoe had been sunk by them. There were legends of destruction by them, and of how the gods and devils used them as weapons to destroy the war fleets of the enemies of the legend-telling tribes.

When I went to sleep at ten o 'clock that night, we were ranging up and down between Takepoto and Takaroa, steering no course but that of prudence, and waiting for the dawn.

I came on deck again at four. The moon was two thirds down the steep slope of the west, a golden sphere vaster than ever before. The sea was bright and quaking, and shoals of fish were waking and parting the shining surface of the water.

Suddenly from out of the gloom of the distance there loomed as strange a vision as ever startled a wayfarer.

A huge ship, under bare poles, solemn and lonely of aspect and almost out of the water, lifted a black bulk as if bearing down upon us. Somber and ominous, void of light or life, fancy peopled it with a ghostly crew. I almost expected to read upon its quarter the name of Vanderdecken's specter-ship, and to hear the mournful voice of the *Flying Dutchman's* skipper report that he had at last reached a haven.

The weirdness of this unexpected sight was incredibly surprising. It electrified me, dismayed me, as few phenomena have.

Piri a Tuahine, at the wheel, called down to the captain.

"*Paparai te pahi matai!*" he announced in the even tone of the Maori sailor. "The ship wrecked in the cyclone!"

Moet came on deck in pajamas, surveyed the spectacle of desolation, said "*Bon jour!*" to me, gave an order to the sailor to "Keep her off," and returned to snatch another nap. I saw through the stripped masts of the wrecked ship the fires of the bakers who mix their flour with cocoanut-milk, and wrap their loaves in cocoanut-leaves to bake. They were comforting as tokens of the living, contrasted with the sorrowful skeleton of one-time glory in that isolated cradle of rocks.

Kopcke stuck his head through the companionway to observe our bearings, squinted at the somber wraith through his heavy eyes,—he and McHenry had played *écarté* most of the night,—and replied to my query:

"As you say, *mon garçon,* it is the *County of Roxburgh,* that English ship. She lost her reckoning, and in a big hurricane crashed upon the reef. Her crew put over a boat but it was smashed at once, and those who reached the shore were badly bruised and broken by the coral. When the people of Takaroa—my girl's father was one of them—rushed to succor them, they fought them off, because their books said the Paumotuans were savages and cannibals. It was n't till they saw Takauha, the *gendarme,* and he showed them his red stripe on the sleeve of his jacket, that they realized they were not on a cannibal isle. Takauha brought Monsieur George Fordham, an Englishman, to interpret for them, and they were taken care of. They had broken arms and legs, and heads, too. Mapuhi bought the ship from Lloyd's for fifteen hundred francs. Think of that! He took everything off he could, but the hull, masts, and yards stayed on. He made thousands of dollars out of the ship, and in his store you will find the doors and chests and the glass. She was built in Scotland."

Her hull and decks of heavy metal, and her masts and yards, great iron tubes, she had defied even that master wrecker, Mapuhi, to disrobe her of more than her ornaments. Carried over the reef upon a gigantic wave, and perched upon a bed of coral in which she now fitted as snugly as in a dry-dock, she had withstood the storms and tides of years, and doubtless must stay in

that solitary spot until time should disintegrate her metal and dissolve its atoms in the eternal sea.

The palms on the atoll paraded in battalions, waving their dark heads like shakos, and the surf shone in silver splashes, as I sat on the cabin house and watched the dawn unfold. Slowly the moon withdrew. At half-past five o'clock, the mother of life and her coldly brilliant satellite were in concert, and the ocean was exquisitely divided by sunbeams and moonbeams matching for favor in my admiring eyes.

Kopcke reappeared with a cigarette. He had an unusual chance to find me alone, and was hungry for information.

"There is a passage in the reef at Takaroa," he said, "but you can bet the *Marara* won't go through it. It is plenty big enough to let her in, but that takes seamanship. Now, I have seen Mapuhi sail his schooner through this passage in half a gale of wind, and swing her about inside in the space most chauffeurs in Tahiti need to turn their automobiles. No one else would try it. He won't go in; but Mapuhi would have his crew stand by, and, with the wheel in his own hands, would tear through the opening as if he had all the seven seas about him."

I was below washing my hands, when the roar of the breakers came to my ears with the call of Moet that a boat was leaving. I rushed to the waist of the schooner and, catching hold of a belayed rope's end, dropped on the dancing thwart. Chocolat made a bound and landed on his master's lap. Moet swore, but we were away.

There was a high sea, and for a few seconds it was

pitch and toss whether we could keep right side up. However, we struck the gait of the rollers, and, with Piri a Tuahine at the long steering-oar, moved toward the beach, urged on by rowers and breakers, but opposed by a strong outsetting current.

The dexterity of the steersman saved us a dozen times from capsizing. Often we climbed waves that, but for an expert guidance, would have crashed over us. Many and many a boat turns over in these "landings" and spills its life freight to death or hurt. Nearing the passage, a white and brawling two hundred feet between murderous rocks, the boat had to be swung obliquely to enter, and we hung upon a comber's peak for a seeming age, the rowers sweating furiously at the oars, until Piri a Tuahine gave a staccato signal. Oars inboard, we rushed down the shore side of the breaker, and were at peace in a lovely lagoon.

Of the many miles of circumference of Takaroa, a tiny *motu* was inhabited by the hundred and fifty people, and on it they had built a stone quay for small boats. We made fast to it and sprang ashore.

CHAPTER VI

Diffidence of Takaroans—Hiram Mervin's description of the cyclone—Teamo's wonderful swim—Mormon missionaries from America—I take a bath.

THERE was no stir on the quay of Takaroa. In these latitudes the civilized stranger is shocked by the indifference to his arrival of the half-naked native. It enrages a prideful white. He perhaps remembers the pages of Cook and the other discoverers, who wrote of the overflowing enthusiasm of the new-found aborigines for them; but he forgets the pages of history since national, religious, and business rivalries invaded the South Seas. These Paumotuans, and, indeed, most Polynesian peoples, are kin to pet cats who madden mistresses by pretending not to hear calls, and by finding views from windows interesting when asked to show their accomplishments or fine coats. Though they may have seen no outsider for months, these Paumotuans will appear as unconcerned at a white visitor's coming as if circuses dropped in their midst daily. Yet every movement, every word of a newcomer is as alluring to their imaginations, bored by the sameness of their days, as a clown's antics to a child.

"It is a politeness and pride, not indifference," had explained my friend, that first gentleman of Tahiti, the Chevalier Tetuanui, of Mataiea. "We simple islanders have been so often rebuffed by uncultivated whites that we wait for advances. It is our etiquette."

Atoll of Hikuera after the cyclone

The wrecked *County of Roxburgh*

The main thoroughfare of the village stretched up from the quay half a mile, with one or two ramifying byways, along which straggled the humble homes of the Takaroans. There were not the usual breakfast fires before them, as in Tahiti, where breadfruit and *feis* are to be cooked, nor did the appetizing odor of coffee rise, as in Tahiti, for Mormonism forbade coffee to its adherents as it did alcohol and tobacco. Beside the quay were dozens of cutters, and a small launch. Canoes were being relegated to lesser civilizations by the fast sailing cutters. Motor power was new here; almost new in Tahiti. But a few years and it would be common, for while the islander cared nothing for time, he was attracted to labor-saving machines.

Captain Moet set the sailors to unload the *Marara's* boat, and the chief of Takaroa appeared. The French, whose island possessions in Polynesia occupy sea room in spots from eight to twenty-seven degrees below the equator, and from 136 to 155 west of Greenwich, have left survive, in title at least, the chieftaincies, the form of government they found upon seizure. *"Monsieur le Chef,"* they said of the native officials here, as they did of a head cook in a restaurant. These chiefs, though nominally the representatives of French sovereignty, were, in pitiable reality, wretchedly-paid tax collectors, policemen, and bailiffs. But they often were gentlemen—gentlemen of rich color. The strapping fellow who had *viséd* the documents of the *Marara,* though wearing only denim overalls, lacked nothing in courtesy. A rent disclosed that the "alls" were over his birth-suit.

I was not arrayed very smartly, having left collar,

cravat, and socks, as well as shirt and undershirt, aboard. Pongee coat and trousers, with flexible shoes, were in this tropic an ideal compromise with culture. Open the coat, and the breeze had access to one's *puris naturalibus,* and, if one had to swim or wade, little clothing was wetted. The chief surveyed me, saw that I took no interest in the cargo, and drew his own conclusion.

"Ia ora na!" he said gently, and led me toward the village.

It was seven years earlier that the last great cyclone had devastated these islands. Takaroa was mute witness of its ruin. The houses were almost all mere shacks of corrugated iron—walls and roofs of hideous gray metal. A few wooden buildings, including two stores, were the exceptions. The people had neither courage nor money to rebuild comfortable abodes. Lumber must be brought from Tahiti and carpenters employed. No more unsuitable material than iron for a house in this climate could be chosen, except glass, but it was comparatively cheap, easily put together, and a novelty. It was as unharmonious a note among the palms as rag-time music in a Greek theater, and in the next cyclone each separate sheet would be a guillotine. Nothing more than a few feet above the ground withstands these hurricanes, which fell cocoanuts as fire eats prairie-grass.

We had not walked a hundred yards before a powerful half-caste stopped me with a soft *"Bon jour!"* A good-looking, clean-cut man of thirty years, the white blood in him showed most in his efficient manner and his excellent French.

"You are American," he said in that tongue in the mildest voice.

"Mais oui." I replied.

"I am Hiram Mervin, son of Captain Mervin, owner of the schooner *France-Austral.* My father is American, and I am half American, though I speak no English. You may have read of me. I repaired his boat, the *Shark,* for that American author, Jack. His engine was broken down. He wanted me to go to Australia as his mechanician, but my father said no, and when an American says no, he means that, *n'est-ce pas, Monsieur?"*

"Where were you," I inquired, "when the last cyclone blew?"

His fine brown face wrinkled. Hiram had a firm chin, a handsome black mustache, and teeth as hard and white as the keys of a new piano.

"Ah, you have heard of how we escaped? *Non? Alors, Monsieur,* I will tell you. I am a diver, and here I keep a store. We were at Hikueru, my father and I, when it began to storm. Father watched the barometer, and the sea. The mercury lowered fast, and the waves rolled bigger every hour.

" 'The barometer is sinking fast. The ocean will drown the island,' said my father. 'Noah built an ark, but we cannot float on one; we must get above the water.'

"There were four cocoanut-trees, solid and thick-trunked, that grew a few feet from one another. Bad planting, *oui,* but most useful. He set me and some others, his close friends, to climbing these trees and cutting off their heads, so that they stood like pillars of

the temple. It was a pity, I thought, for we ruined them. Then we took heavy planks and lifted them to the tops of these trees and spiked and roped them in a platform.

"*Attendez, Monsieur!* All this time the cyclone increased. My father was not with us. It was the diving season on Hikueru, and people were gathered from all over the atolls, and from Tahiti, hundreds of Maoris, and many whites. My father was directing the efforts of the people to save their property. We had not yet thought of our lives being in great danger. We islanders could not live if we expected the worst.

"A gale from the east, strong but not dangerous, had lashed the water of the lagoon and made it like the ocean, and then, turning to the west, had driven the ocean mad. Now the ocean was coming over the reef, the waves very high and threatening. We knew that if ever the sea and the lagoon met to fight, we would be the victims. Thus, Monsieur, the lagoon surrounded by the island, and the usually calm waters inside the outer reef, were both in a frightful state, and we began to fear what had been in other atolls. My father was wise, but, being a Mormon and also an American, he must not think of himself first. My father came to us and tested the platform, and showed us where to strengthen it.

" 'The island will be covered by the sea and the lagoon,' he said. 'Make haste, in the name of God!'

"Some one, a woman, called to him for help, and he ran to her. A sheet of iron from a roof came through the air, and wounded him. I thought his head was almost cut off, from the quantity of blood. *Mais, Mon-*

sieur, c'etait terrible! We caught hold of my father, and made a sling with our ropes, and lifted him, unconscious, to the platform at the top of the trees. He raised his head and looked around.

" 'Go down again!' he commanded. 'Cut down those three trees. If they fall they will strike us.'

"Monsieur, that was my father, the American, who spoke, though nearly dead. He was wise. We did as he said, as quickly as we could, and climbed back to the platform. The great breakers of the ocean were now far up on our beach at each end of the tide. The whole width of the land from the edge of the beach to the lagoon is but the length of four or five cocoanut-trees. The water below the atoll was forced up through the coral sand, Monsieur, until it was like the dough of the baker when he first pours in the cocoanut juice. People still on the ground went up to their arms in it. We feared the atoll would be taken back to the depths. Our platform was nearer the lagoon than the moat—to be exact, two hundred feet from the moat, and a hundred from the lagoon. My father had us tie him to the platform and to the trees. We had brought plenty of ropes for that.

"Mon Dieu! Below the poor people were tying themselves to the trunks of the cocoanut-trees, and climbing them, if they could, and roosting in the branches like the wild birds of the air. They were shrieking and praying. There were many whites, too, because all the pearl-shell and pearl buyers, and the keepers of stores like us, were there from Papeete. The little children who could not climb were crying, and many parents stayed with them to die. The sea was now like the reef,

white as the noon clouds with foam. We had bound my father's wounds with my shirt, but the blood dripped on the boards where he lay with his eyes open and watching the cyclone."

The chief, who had accompanied me, became restless. He understood no French.

"*Monsieur l'Americain,* do I detain you?" Hiram Mervin asked me.

I signed for him to continue.

"Then came the darkness. There were only the sounds of the wind and water, the crash of the cocoanut-trees as they fell with their human fruit. We heard the houses being swept away; we thought we caught glimpses of vessels riding on the breakers, and we imagined we caught the shrieks of those being destroyed. But the wind itself sounded like the voices of people. I heard many calling my name.

" 'Hiram Mervin, pray for us! Save us!' said the cyclone.

"Ah, I cannot tell it! It was too dreadful. It was hours after darkness that the sea reached its height. Those below were torn from hummocks of coral, from the roofs of houses, and from trees. We knew that the sharks and other devils of the sea were seizing them. The sea rushed over the land into the lagoon and the lagoon returned to the sea. When they met under us, they fought like the bulls of Bashan. Hikueru was being swallowed as the whale swallowed *Iona,* the *perofeta.* We held on though our trees bent like the mast of a schooner in a typhoon. We called often to one another to be sure none was lost. When morning came, after night on night of darkness, the waters re-

ceded, and we saw the work of the demon. Almost every house had been cut down, and most of the trees. The cemeteries were washed up, and the bodies, bones, and skulls of our dead for decades were strewn about or in the ocean. The lagoon was so full of corpses old and new that our people would not fish nor dive for shells there for a long time. The spirits are still seen as they fly through the air when there is a gale. But, Monsieur, our four cocoanut-trees had stood as the pillars of the temple of Birigi'ama Iunga. Not for nothing was my father born in America. *Mais, Monsieur,* the chief is waiting. The *mitinare* will be glad to see you. *Au revoir.*"

Hiram took a step to return to the quay when he called back to me. "Ah, there is Teamo, who is the Living Ghost," and he pointed to a Paumotuan woman who was coming up from the quay towards where we three stood. Teamo had the balanced gait of one who sits or stands much in canoes, and she strode like a man, her powerful figure showing under her red Mother-Hubbard which clung close to her stoutish form. Short, she was like most of the Paumotuans, of middle height, but with her head set upon a pillar of a neck, and her bare chocolate arms, rounded, but hinting of the powerful muscles beneath the skin. Her hair was piled high on her head like a crown, and upon it was a basket in which were two chickens. A live pig was under her arm. She was carrying this stock from our boat.

"There," said Hiram, "there is Teamo, who is the greatest swimmer of all these seas, and who went through the great cyclone as does a fish. *Haere mai!*" he called, "This *monsieur,* who is an American, like my

father, wants to hear about your swimming of the seas in the *matai rorofai.*"

Teamo put down her pig and the chickens from her head, sat upon her haunches, and drawing a diagram in the coral sand, she told her strange tale in her own language.

"The water is coming over the atoll, and the lagoon and the sea are one," said Teamo, "when my brother and sisters and I climbed the great cocoanut-tree by our house, because it is death below. You know the cocoanut-trees. You see they have no limbs. You know that it is hard to hold on because the great trees shake in the wind, and there is no place to sit. Only we could put our arms around the leaves and hold as best we might. When it comes on dark we feel the wind roaring louder about us, and we hear the cries of those who are in other trees. Then far out on the reef we hear the pounding of the sea and the waves begin more and more to come over the atoll until they cover it deeper and deeper, and each succeeding wave climbs higher and higher toward where we cling. We know that soon there will come a wave whose teeth will tear us from the tree.

"That wave came all of a sudden. It was like a cloud in the sky. It lifted me out of the cocoanut-leaves as the diver tears the shell from the bank at the bottom of the lagoon. It lifted me and took me over the lagoon, over the tops of all trees, and when it went back to the ocean, it carried me miles with it. I was on the top of its back, almost in the sky, and it was as black as the spittle of the devil-fish."

The chief was listening attentively, for she spoke in Paumotuan. Hiram Mervin interposed:

"Teamo went away from Hikueru on that wave and stayed three days," said he. "She was numbered with the dead when the count of the living was made by my father."

Teamo squatted on the sand of the road. I was afraid she would weary in her relation, as do her race. *"Parau vinivini!"* I said, and smoothed her shoulders.

"I kept upon its back," she resumed. "All through that night I swam or floated, fighting the waves, and fearing the sharks. I called on Birigi'ama Iunga and on Ietu Kirito, and on God. Hours and hours I kept up until the dawn. Then I saw a coral-reef, and swam for it. I was nearly crushed time and time on the rocks, but at last I crawled up on the sand above the water, and fell asleep.

"When I awoke I was all naked. The waves had torn my dress from me, and the sun was burning my body. I was bruised and wounded, but I prayed my thanks to the God of the Mormons. I stood upon my feet, and I saw all about me the *pohe roa,* the blackening and broken bodies of people of Hikueru. They, too, had floated on the same wave, but they had perished. They were all about me. I searched for cocoanuts, for I was drying up with thirst and shaking with hunger. At last I found one under the body of my cousin, and, breaking it with a rock, I drank the water in it, and again fell asleep.

"Now when I awoke I was stronger, and a distance away in the water I saw a box floating. I broke it

open, and found it had in it tins of salmon. They were from some store in Hikueru, for I soon knew there was no living human on that atoll but me. I could not open the tins of salmon but pierced holes in them with a piece of coral and sucked out the fish. God was even better to me, for I found a camphor-wood chest with a shirt and *pareu* in it, and I put them on. I then found a canoe thrown up on the beach, and it was half full of rain-water. I made up my mind to return to my home in the canoe. It was broken and there was no paddle. I patched it, I found the outrigger, and tied it on with cocoanut fiber which I plaited. I made a paddle from the top of the salmon case, and lashed it to the handle of a broom I found. I kept enough fresh water in the canoe, and after two days of eating and resting I pushed out in the canoe, with the remainder of the salmon. I could not see any other atoll, but I trusted to God and prayed as I paddled. I pushed over the reef at daybreak of the third day, and paddled until the next morning, when I saw Hikueru, and reached the remnants of my village."

Teamo gathered up her burdens and, with a reminiscent smile, walked on.

"Monsieur l'Americain," said Hiram, "you may be sure that when she returned to Hikueru from Tekokota —that atoll was fifteen miles away—they were afraid of her, as the friends of Lataro when Ietu Kirito raised him from the dead."

The chief's restlessness increased, as if he must deliver me somewhere quickly; but I thought of the man they called the king of the Paumotus.

"The house of Mapuhi, is it—"

"The chief is taking you there now," said Hiram. "The elders are there. My father was long-time the partner of Mapuhi. They sailed their schooners together and had their divers."

"You and your father are Mormons?"

"*Nous sommes bons Mormons,*" replied the half-caste, seriously. "Am I not named for the king who built the temple of Solomon. It is a shame, Monsieur, that those *Konito* are permitted in these islands. They corrupt the true religion."

The chief touched my arm, and we proceeded, after an exchange of bows with the son of the American. We walked to the very end of the small *motu* or islet. The *motus* are often long but always very narrow, between three hundred and fifteen hundred feet.

The people of Takaroa had chosen to pitch their huts on this spot of the whole atoll because of the pass into the lagoon being there. That was the determining factor just as the banks of rivers and bays were selected by American pioneers. Where the salt water was on three sides—the moat, the lagoon, and the channel between the next *motu*—was the residence of our seeking.

It was a neat domicile of dressed lumber, raised ten feet from the ground on stilts. It was fenced about, and here and there a banana-plant or fig-tree grew in a hole dug in the coral, surrounded by a little wall of coral and with rotting tin cans heaped about. Driven in the trunks were nails. I asked the chief the reason, and he replied vaguely that the trees needed the iron of the cans and the nails.

We were entering the grounds now, and I guessed it was Mapuhi's house.

"Mapuhi is here?" I inquired.

"*'E,* he is at prayer, maybe."

The chief shrank back, as we were on the porch.

"*Faaea oe; tehaeri nei au.* You stay; I go," he said.

On the side veranda, a girl of seventeen or so, in a black gown, lay on a mattress and yawned as she scratched her knee with her toes—not of the same leg. She was almost naked, slender and very brown. These Paumotuans are darkened by the sun, their hair is not long and beautiful like the Tahitians'. Beauty is a matter of food and fresh water. She lay on this bare mattress, without sheets or pillows, evidently just awakening for the day. She made quite a picture when she smiled. The daughter of the king, doubtless.

There was a noise in response to my knock, and the door opened. A tousled pompadour of yellowish-red hair above hazel eyes peeped out, the eyes snapped in amazement, and their owner, a strapping chap of twenty-five, put out his hand.

"Hello! Where are you from?" he said.

"Off the *Marara* just now, and from the United States not long ago."

"Well, gee cricketty, I 'm glad to see you! My name 's Overton, T. E. Overton of Logan, Utah. Come here, Martin! He 's Martin De Kalb of Koosharem, Utah. We 're Mormon elders. Say, it 's good to talk United States!"

A body leaped out of bed in an inner room, and a pair

of blue eyes under brown hair, an earnest face, supported by an athletic figure in pajamas, rushed out. The owner seized my hand.

"I 'll be doggoned! I did n't know anything was in sight. The *Marara!* Any mail for me? Come in, and we 'll dress."

The king's daughter had fled when the missionaries appeared. I entered the living-room and found a chair, while the elders flooded me with questions from their sleeping quarters, as they put on their clothes. While I answered, I looked at the home of this foremost of the Paumotuans, whose father and mother had eaten their kind.

A dining-room table and half a dozen cheap chairs were all the furniture. South Sea Islanders found sitting in chairs uncomfortable, and these were plainly guest seats, for governors and pearl-buyers and missionaries.

The walls held prints curiously antagonistic. Brigham Young, founder of the Utah Mormon colony, with a curly white beard, smooth upper lip, and glorified countenance, sat in an arm-chair, holding a walking-stick of size, with a gilded head. A splendiferous colored lithograph of the temple at Salt Lake flanked the portrait.

On the other wall was a double pink page from a New York gazette, usually found in barber-shops and on boot-black stands, with pictures of two prize-fighters, Jeffries and Johnson, one white and the other black, glaring viciously at each other, and with threatening gloved fists. Beneath this picture was in handwriting:

Teferite e Tihonitone
na
Taata Moto

Emerging from their bedroom, the elders caught my eyes fastened on the pink page, and they looked grieved, as housewives whose kitchen is found in disorder.

"They 're crazy about boxing," said Overton. "That's young Mapuhi who put that up and wrote that. We reprove them for such ungodly interests, but they are good Mormons, anyhow."

I led the conversation to their own work in this group. They became enthusiastic. Sincere faces they had, simple and strong, of the pioneer type. They were sons of healthy peasantry, and products of plain living in the open. De Kalb had left a wife and child in Koosharem, and Overton a sweetheart in Logan, to take their part in spreading their gospel among these natives. They were voluntary missionaries, paying their own expenses for the two or three years they were to give to proselytizing, according to the rule of their church, they said. They were eager to return to their women and their farms, and their service was soon to be at an end. Each had spent a year or so in Papeete in the Mormon Mission House, learning the Paumotuan language and the routine of their duties, and now for a year and more they had journeyed from atoll to atoll where they had churches, preaching and making converts, they said. They talked with fervor of their success.

"The Lord has been mighty good to us," said De Kalb, who was in his twenties. "We 've got this island hog-tied. If it were n't for the Josephites and some of those Catholic priests, we 'd have every last one. Those

Josephites are sorest, because they are deserters from Mormonism. Why are they? Why, their so-called prophet was Joseph. I forget his other name. Oh, no, he was not our martyr, Joseph Smith. They split off from the real church. They don't amount to a hill of beans, but when the Mormons left these islands, because the French were hostyle, these Josephites sneaked in and got quite a hold by lying about us, before we got on to their game and came back here. They 're out for the stuff. The real name of our church here is, *Te Etaretia a Jesu Metia e te feia mo'a i te Mau Mahana Hopea Nei."*

"Gosh, I 'd like to get my hair cut and roached," said Elder Overton. "It was fine, when I left Papeete. I just have to let it go," and he stirred his golden shock with the air of a man who has abandoned comfort for an ideal.

"Do the Paumotuans cling to their heathen customs?" I asked.

Overton looked at the floor, but De Kalb, the older, spoke up.

"They will circumcise," he said hesitatingly. "We try to stop it, but they say it is right; that it makes them a separate people. They often wait until thirteen years of age before prompted to perform the rite. The kids don't appreciate it."

"And tithes?" Your church members give a tenth of their incomes?"

Again De Kalb replied:

"They should," he said. "These Takaroans are just beginning to see the beauty of that divine law. It is hard to make them exact. Perhaps they give a twen-

tieth. It 's cocoanuts, you know, and it 's hard to keep account."

"Of course, polygamy is—" I was about to say "forbidden," when I felt that I had broached a delicate topic. I was stupid. Here in a lagoon surrounded by a narrow fringe of coral, to bang the eternal polyangle of one man and many women! The elders looked pained. I was about to withdraw the remark with an apology, but Westover made the most of his twenty-four years and waived aside my amends.

"It must be met," he said. "We obey the laws of the land. The American law forbids plural marriages, and our church expressly forbids them. We are loyal Americans. We say to these people that polygamy is not to be practised. That 's true, no matter what the Josephites say."

Elder De Kalb, who was watching me, interposed:

"I suppose you 're not a Mormon, but, as a matter of fact, is n't polygamy, with wives and children to the extent of a man's purse, all avowed and cherished, better than adultery?"

Overton got upon his feet. "You bet it is," he declared, with intense feeling. "It 's nature's law. There are more women than men by millions. Men are polygamous by instinct. And, by heavens! look at all those old maids at home and in England!"

Considering the sorrows of old maids, I felt my standards being endangered, but was saved from downright perversion by accepting the royal favor of a tub of fresh water from a cistern that caught the rain-water from the roof. I was seeking to immerse myself in the inadequate bath when I saw the daughter of the king

Photo from Underwood and Underwood

Mormon elders baptizing in the lagoon

Over the reef in a canoe

gazing at me interestedly, and I hope that I blushed. But the princess distinctly winked in the direction of my hosts as I attempted to sink into oblivion in the ten-gallon pail.

CHAPTER VII

Breakfast with elders—The great Mapuhi enters—He tells of San Francisco—Of prizefighters and Police gazettes—I reside with Nohea—Robber crabs—The cats that warred and caught fish.

TIMES in my life a bath had been a guerdon after days of denial in desert and at sea, but seldom so grateful as that in the stony garden of Mapuhi under the tropical sun. My wounds were healing, but the new skin forming in a score of places bound me like patches of plaster. Not many houses in the Paumotus were constructed to impound rain, even for drinking purposes. The cocoanut furnished the liquid for quenching thirst, or the brackish rain-water retained in holes dug five or six feet in the coral was drunk by the natives. The Europeans of any permanent residence gathered the rain in barrels or cisterns, and sometimes made ample reservoirs, while in a few atolls were little fresh lakes fed by rains, the bottoms of which were formed by a coral limestone impervious to water. Such lakes were very precious.

When I went up the steps to the house, I found the Mormon elders fully dressed and preparing breakfast for three. A can of California peaches, a small broiled fish, and pilot biscuits were all the meal, but the grace was worthy of a feast. They bowed their heads, closed their eyes, and implored God to bless their fare, to make it strengthen them for the affairs of this world only as they conduced to His greater honor and glory. And

they put in a word for me, "Our brother who has come among us all unannounced, but doubtless for some good purpose known to Him who directs the sparrow's fall, and the sphere's movements."

"We have to economize dreadfully," said De Kalb, apologetically. "We are spending our savings. Canned goods are dear. But we are saving souls right along. There is to be a service in the temple in half an hour, and we would like you to attend. We are going to pray for a successful *rahui,* the diving season, and for the safety of the divers. You know they never know when they 're going to come up dying or dead from the bottom of the lagoon."

As he spoke there was framed in the doorway a native whom I knew instinctively to be the monarch of this cluster of atolls. He wore only a dark-blue *pareu* stamped with white flowers, but some men have an air which makes you know at first sight that they are masters of those about them. So was this Mapuhi, who, of all Paumotuans in a hundred years, had become distinguished among whites. Mapuhi was a giant in stature, a man solidly planted on spreading bare feet of which each toe was articulated as the fingers of a master pianist's hand. His legs were rounded columns, the muscles hidden under the pad of flesh, his chest a great barrel, and below it a mighty belly, the abdomen of a Japanese or Chinese god of plenty. He was almost black from a life upon and in the salt water.

His head was huge, a mass of grizzled hair low upon his forehead. His eyes, very large and luminous, gentle but piercing, gave an impression of absolute fearlessness, of breadth of mind, and of devotion to his idea, be

it ideal or indulgence. His chin was round and powerful, but not prognathous. His mouth was well-formed, big and sensual under the short gray mustache, and not lacking in humor or a trace of irony. His nose was all but missing, for once when building a schooner an adz had slipped and cut it off. His face was thus flattened, with a slight suggestion of a fragment of a Greek gladiator's head; but it was not so disfigured as one might think, and preserved a mien of dignity and reserve force, of moral grandeur and superiority which one might call kingly were kings as of old. But it was in his eyes I read the reasons for his rise from the ruck of his race to lordship over it, and to the admiration of the white traders and mariners whom he bested in all their own ways—navigation, ship-building, and even trade.

When Mapuhi saw me, he looked inquiringly at the elders, and then smiled. I saw two rows of teeth, large as my thumb nail, and as brilliant as the pearl-shell from which he had wrung his vast fortune. He stood upright, straight as a mast, solid as a tree, and commanding in every sense. More than seventy years of wrestling with the devils of the sea and lagoon, and the outcasts of Europe and America, had failed to bow him an inch or to take from him apparently a single attribute of his vigorous manhood except that across his broad face ran a score of wrinkles, which criss-crossed his forehead into diamond panes, and made one know he had learned the secrets of man and wind and water by fearful experience.

Thus was Mapuhi who had made the winds and currents his sport, who in the dark of night ran the foaming

passes that the white mariner shunned even in daylight, and who had made the trees and lagoons of his isles pay him princely toll. This was the man who alone had outwitted the white trader who came to take much and give little.

"Good morning," said Mapuhi, in English, of which he knew only a few words. He gave me a probing glance, and retired, to appear in a few minutes in black calico trousers, a pink undershirt, and a belt of red silk. His eyes asked me if I was a trader come to compete with him. He sat down in a great chair that vaguely resembled a throne, wrought of bamboo, and carved, and trussed to bear the exceeding weight of the man, for Mapuhi was over three hundred pounds. As he sat he inquired of the elders the reason for my being there. He did it with his foot. He twisted his toes into the most expressive interrogation, which was a plain question to the elders. They said in Paumotuan that I was an American, an important man, but precisely what were my affairs they did not know. I was interested in Mormonism, in Takaroa, and in the career of Mapuhi. Assured that I was not another Tahiti trader, Mapuhi put out his great hands and took into them one of mine, and pressed it, as he said in Paumotuan, "My island is yours."

I was loath to talk my poor Paumotuan, because I wanted to get as closely as possible to the mind of this noblest of his tribe; and so I conversed in French, except when I appealed to the elders for more exact meanings in Paumotuan.

"Mapuhi," I began, "even in San Francisco sailors know your skill in these dangerous waters."

"Ah, San Francisco!" said Mapuhi, regretfully. "I was there. I had a ship built there, and I sailed it to Takaroa. I lived there a week in your great house into which one drives with horses."

I conjured a picture of Mapuhi coming in a hack from the dock in San Francisco to the Palace Hotel, and of the striking contrast between this mighty man of these isles and the little men of finance and of commerce who must have dined about him. Kalakaua, king of the Hawaiian Islands, had lived there, and had died there. But charming as was that prince of *bons vivants,* he was nevertheless the victim of the white man's vices, and as years passed, his appearance became that of an overfed, over-ginned head porter. Even the patrons of the Palace must have had some vision of this man Mapuhi on the deck of his schooner, his vast chest and arms bare, his hair blown by the wind. Or, emerging from the waters of the lagoon, arising from the plunge to the coral cave where the lethal shark looks for prey. This was what he spoke in face and form to me.

"I had seven nights," said Mapuhi, "in your great house, and seven days in your streets. The people were like the fish in the lagoon of Pukapuka, where no man seeks them, and where they crowd each other until they kill. I went in a room from the ground to where I slept, a room that moved on a cord; and I rode in other rooms that moved about the roads on iron bands in which people sat who never said a word to one another, and who never spoke to me. As I walked in the roads they were dark as in the cocoanut-groves, for your houses make caves of the roads, as under the barrier-reef."

"But, Mapuhi," I said, "we are happy in our way."

"You do not laugh much," returned the chief. "Only I heard the laughter from the houses in which you sold rum. I am a good Mormon. I do not now drink your mad waters, but in your city only the mad waters made men happy. I was a gentile myself many years and did not know the truth. I, too, drank the mad waters."

Mapuhi's eyes sought the picture of Brigham Young which was on the wall, but mine went to the figures of the prize-fighters, Jeffries and Johnson. Mapuhi intercepted my glance and immediately became alert.

"Was it possible that I had ever seen *Teferite* or *Tihonitone?*"

This question was put to Elder Overton, who hesitated to interpret. The subject was a scandal throughout the Paumotus. I read that in the preacher's face, but, comprehending the import of the words, I said that I knew *Teferite;* that he lived very near me, and that I saw him often in his store. Once or twice I had bought goods of him. He was getting very fat since *Tihonitone* had whipped him, and most of his time he hunted fish and wild animals. *Tihonitone,* the *neega,* as the Paumotuans call Afro-Americans, I had seen more than once, I said.

"That *neega* knocked down the white *Teferite* and took the hundreds of thousands of francs given the winner," said Mapuhi, with spirit. "They are both great men, but the *neega* is the greatest. Next to the chiefs of the Mormon church, they are the greatest Americans."

"Have you never heard of Roosevelt, Teddy Roosevelt?" I demanded.

He did not know the man. An acquaintance in Tahiti sent him now and then the pink paper which contained the pictures of fighting men, of fighting dogs, and of women whose bosoms and legs were bare. America must now be full of these fights, and of beautiful women almost naked, he said.

"Your two most famous men, *Teferite and Tihonitone,* sell rum. The goods you bought of *Teferite* was rum, for he keeps a rum store in Los Angelese, and the *neega* in Keekago."

Each sentence tore the elders' hearts, but Mapuhi salved their wounds.

"These men are gentiles, I know," he concluded. "The elders have informed me. Mormons sell no rum. But tell me, is *Tihonitone* master of his white wife? I have her picture. She is beautiful."

Overton frowned.

"Mapuhi," he said, gently, "you make too much of those 'Police Gazette' pictures. The godly in America never see them. They are for the rum-drinkers, and are found only in the resorts of the wicked. Strength is admirable, but the fighting men of our country are the Philistines whom Jehovah chastised."

To me, in English, the Utahan said: "That coon's licking the white man has cost the whole white race dear. A preacher in India told me England could better have afforded to give Johnson five million dollars, for what it has cost in troops. The same in Africa. The evil of prize-fighting was never better exemplified. Jeffries' beating has hurt religion seriously."

Mapuhi and the elders left the room, and returned in a few minutes in black broadcloth coats and high white

collars, in which they sweated woefully. We all walked to the temple. It was close beside the beach, built of coral blocks, smeared with cement, white as the ocean foam. Its iron roof, painted crimson, was the only spot of color on the *motu,* except the nodding palms.

"It is like the blood of the martyrs," exclaimed Overton, piously. "The temple was begun over twenty years ago. Nine years it took to build it, because the converts were few and poor, and labor scarce. Twice cyclones leveled it. Ten years ago the Takaroans began it again, and for two years it has been completed. I know of no more sublime monument to the true religion than this little temple. Every block of coral is a redeemed soul. If only the gentiles in America knew the work we were doing!"

We entered the temple reverently, the congregation, already seated, nearly filling it. On its rude coral floor were rough benches accommodating five or six persons each. A pulpit of gingerbread scrollwork, the only other furniture, was apologized for by De Kalb.

"It was the plainest we could get. It was made for the Catholics. They like 'em fancy, like their religion."

Elder Overton preached the sermon. De Kalb read from the Bible and the "Book of Mormon." The people who filled the edifice paid all attention. Serious always in their demeanor, except when affected by alcohol, they were positively melancholy in religion. All who could afford it wore black, and the oldsters had long frock coats of funereal hue, and collars like the Americans.

After the services, I broached to the elders my necessity of a habitation. With the diving season opening

in a few weeks, divers and traders would be at Takaroa from all about, and the 140 people of the atoll would be multiplied three or four times. Most of these divers would crowd in the houses of the natives, and the majority of the traders would live on their schooners. Mapuhi regretted that all his accommodations were bespoken.

The elders took me to the house of Nohea, a small, neat cottage, at the end of the avenue leading from the mole, an avenue all shining white with coral sand. It reminded me of the shell roads of my native State, Maryland, in my childhood. It was lined with the shanties and huts of the inhabitants.

Nohea greeted me quietly. He was a dark man, six feet four inches in height, big all over, his muscles well insulated by deep fat, and with the placid giantism of a Yeddo wrestler. He was taciturn, reserved, and melancholy. Most of these natives became spiritually strained when, as commonly, late in life, they gave up the wicked pleasures of the flesh—alcohol, tobacco, and philandering. They lost toleration for unrighteousness, and the joy that in their unregenerate state had oozed from their wicked pores turned to acid.

A friend and sometime partner of Mapuhi, and as devout a Mormon, Nohea was, next to Mapuhi, the foremost figure in the archipelago. He was not a trader, except that he sold his pearls, shell, and copra for money and merchandise; but he had dignity, strength, and personality—not quite as had Mapuhi, but more than any other Takaroan. Among Paumotuans few men showed distinctive character. Nohea possessed that, and also physical strength and skill for the diving, for

the handling of boats, and for the making of copra. When there was no white missionary at Takaroa, he was the hierophant of the Mormon church. He conducted the services and advised the faithful, collected the tithes, and admonished the sinners. He did not fail in zeal for that task. Nohea painted a hell darker than a shark's jaws, a pit of horror, lit by black flames which burned the non-Mormons, and a heaven on earth where baked pig was a free dish at all hours. The Mormon heaven is nearer the Mussulman's than the Christian's. Food and rills of fresh water, many beautiful and passionate wives, song and feasting, were promised the Paumotuan. Golden harps and streets of pearl would hardly have brought their tithes to the church treasury.

The very day I joined him I began to see things through his eyes. I was bathing at dusk in the clear waters of the lagoon near our home. The severe heat of the equatorial day had passed, and the still salt lake was as refreshing to my sun-stricken and coral-scratched body as the spring of the oasis to the parched traveler. The night was riding fast after the sunken sun, and driving the last gleam of color from the sky.

As I floated at ease upon the quiet surface of the pale-green lagoon, the sounds of the murmurous twilight—the rustling of the trees and the splash of the surf on the outer shore—were made discordant by a peculiar scraping noise near-by. I turned lazily over on my face and raised my head from the water.

On the coral in the deceptive half-light of the crepuscule was a hideous, shell-backed monster, which had emerged from an unseen lair, and moved slowly and lumberingly toward the cocoanut-trees. Its motions

and appearance, in the semi-obscurity, took on the quality of a dream-beast, affrighting in its amazing novelty. It was like a great paper-mâché animal in a pantomine.

I was beset by apprehension that it might advance to the lagoon and approach me in an element in which it would be my master. I swam swiftly to shore and called, "Nohea!"

My companion came from near our hut, where on the red-hot coral stones, which had been made to glow by a fire of cocoanut-husks, he cooked the fish he had caught that afternoon.

He looked at me inquiringly, and I pointed to the alarming creature now disappearing in the palm-grove.

"*Aue!*" he cried irascibly, and sprang after the nightmare. When I overtook him, he was standing at the foot of a lofty cocoanut-tree and shaking his fist at the object of his pursuit, which was climbing with unbelievable speed up the slippery gray trunk.

"*I teienei!* It is the *kaveu,* that devil of the night who robs us of our cocoanuts while we sleep. But wait! I made a vow to destroy the next one I found thieving!"

Nohea went a hundred yards to where a banana plant was growing in earth brought from Tahiti. He gathered clay and leaves, and with painstaking effort fashioned a wreath of the mixture six inches wide and several feet in length. I stood in wonderment, guessing that he was making a charm to bring about the death of the despoiler of the groves.

Nohea took a length of *coir,* the rope the Paumotuans make of cocoanut-fiber,—from the tree which feeds them, clothes them, and houses them,—and, tying it into a girdle but little larger than the girth of the palm, put

it about his wrists. The cocoanut-tree had, at regular intervals upon its trunk, projecting bands of its tough bark, and about the first of these above his head Nohea slipped the rope. He pulled himself up by it, and, clasping the tree with his legs, seized a higher holding-place. Thus he proceeded with ease until he had reached a point half-way of the lofty column. There he halted, and, taking from his shoulders his matted band, he plastered it firmly around the trunk.

He then slipped to the ground. I was as puzzled as a boy who was told at sailing that the ship was weighing its anchor, and saw no scale.

"That will do for him," said Nohea, "as the reef shatters the canoe when the steersman fails to find the pass."

He returned to the fire, and soon we were absorbed in the pleasant processes of supper. We lived simply, becoming near-to-nature folk, but we had plenty. First, we ate *popo,* tiny fish we had snared in our traps, and which we swallowed raw, after a soaking in the juice of limes. With our *bonito* steak we had broiled cocoanut-meat, and for drink we opened the wondrous chalices of the green nuts and enjoyed the cool wine. There was no breadfruit, for these islands of stone afforded no nourishment to such delicate and rich plants. But we had ship's biscuit from the schooner, and for desert a pot of loganberry jam. Nohea, his stomach full, sat contemplatively on his haunches. Now and then he cocked his ear toward the cocoanut-grove, but he said nothing. The crown of the tree in which the giant crustacean had vanished was lost in the gloom of night. A slight breeze sprang up from the distance toward the

Land of the War Fleet, and *pandanus* and *miki-miki* bushes nodded and gave forth little noises as their leaves and branches rubbed together.

Over all was the atmosphere of mystic aloofness which the white feels so keenly in these far-away dots—the utter difference of scene and incident from the accustomed one of the home land. I mused about my own future in these little known tropics—

Nohea cautiously raised himself to his feet, and, motioning me to be silent, directed my attention to the tree up which had gone the ugly marauder an hour before. We heard plainly a grating, incisive noise, and in a moment a huge cocoanut fell from among the swaying leaves to the earth.

A smothered exclamation of fury broke from the Paumotuan, but he made no step and continued pointing at the palm. Then I heard a scratching, and peering through the darkness with the aid of my electric torch, I saw the colossal crab coming down the trunk. He held on to the slippery bark by the sharp points of his walking legs, and backwardly descended with extreme care.

Nohea watched intently as the animal neared the girdle of clay and leaves. I noted his excitement, but still could not resolve his plan. It flashed upon me as its success was established in an instant of action.

The robber-crab, touching the clay, moved less carefully, and suddenly, to my astonishment, let go his hold, and with claws wildly beating the air, whirled downward from the height of forty feet, crashing on the rocks at the foot of the tree. In a second Nohea was upon him with a club of purau wood. But there

was no need for further punishment. The drop had caused instant death. The immense shell was smashed and the monster lay inert upon the coral stones.

The diver sprang in the air and clapped his hands rapidly, as might a winning bettor at a prize-fight.

"The fool!" he said. "He has no *koekoe*—no bowels of wisdom. He thought the clay was the bottom, and that he was already with the nut he had robbed me of, and which he could open and eat. Many I have killed like that one, but it takes time. I have had such a thief steal my *pareu* for his house, and a bottle of kerosene for mere mischief. We will eat the flesh of this one's legs, and I will melt his fat against the *rahui* when I might have rheumatism."

Nohea showed me a great mass of blue fat under the *kaveu's* tail, and from this he boiled down a quart of the finest oil. It was not only a specific for rheumatism but the best possible lubricant for sewing-machines and clocks, he said. He put some of the oil in the sun, and when thickened it made butter, though not with a milky taste.

This thievish crab seemed marked by his star—doubtless of the Cancer constellation—to play a deceptive part in the crustacean world, for not only had he practically abandoned the water as his element, learned to climb trees, and to eat food utterly foreign to his natural appetite, but he had a habit of hiding his tail when the rest of his body was in full view. He would stick it in any convenient hole, under a log, or even in the cocoanut-shell he had emptied. He was over-conscious and seemingly ashamed of it, like an awkward man of his hands at a wedding.

The *kaveu's* descent from the hermit-crab family might explain his tail-concealment custom, for the hermit concealed his entire body in a borrowed shell, and so, perhaps, the robber-baron was but showing an atavistic remnant of the disguise instinct. The whole crab tribe seemed tainted with this fear of being merely themselves. Many of them picked up a piece of seaweed and stuck in on their projecting curved bristles, and let it grow as a kind of permanent bonnet. Others took pieces of live sponge, and fastened them to hooks on their backs. One clever chap stitched seaweed threads together to form a tube, and then crawled into it. And one masonic crab mixed a sandy cement and plastered its back with it until it looked like the floor of its pond.

These specious masqueraders selected colors, too, to suit their background, and the seaweed or sponge must match the environment or be rejected. Older and hardened backsliders invited oysters and other mollusks and worms that live in limestone pipes to dwell on their shells, and move about with them. I was convinced that these low-down-in-the-scale beings knew more about their environment, and practised "safety first" more assiduously, than did man himself. The biggest robber-crab in the Takaroa groves could not have got a humble hermit brother to volunteer to go to war against a crab colony, or risk his life to glorify the crab state.

In carrying a cocoanut, the robber crab held it under some of its walking legs, and retired, raised high on the tips of its other members a foot from the ground. Its body measured two feet long by eighteen inches wide. It did not use its claws in ascending the tree, but clung with the sharp points of its legs; and I saw it go up steep

Photo by Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

Robber-crab ascending tree at night. One of the few photographs taken of the marauder in action

Photo from Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

Where the *Bounty* was beached and burned

rocks upon these. The remarkable strength of this mollusk was proved when one was placed in an ordinary tin cracker-box, which it could not take hold of, and a few hours later had twisted off the lid. Nohea said that they were not easy to trap, and that more than once a Paumotuan, who had climbed a tree in the night to procure nuts, to his great horror had had his hair seized by a crab. He said that usually they bit off from six to ten nuts upon each ascent of a palm.

"The *kaveu* likes to eat the young turtles when they are hatched and making their first journey to the water," Nohea informed me. "The crab, knowing where the eggs are buried, watches them as they mature in the sand."

I told Nohea of the crabs I had seen in Japanese waters, some stretching seven or eight feet, and another which bore a human face upon its back. To see one of the latter crawling upon the sand was to see what apparently was a human mask moving across the beach. The Japanese said that these crabs were never known until after a fleet of pirates had been destroyed, and the leading villains beheaded upon the sea-shore.

Against the rat, which was perhaps a worse enemy of the beneficent cocoanut than the crab, my friend Nohea had no safeguard. He could not afford to encircle his trees with bands of tin, as did corporate owners of plantations in Tahiti, but he told me, with great appreciation, the story of Willi, the clever American dentist, and his atoll of Tetiaroa, near Tahiti. Once it was the resort of the kings and aristocracy of Tahiti, the sanatorium to which they went when jaded, or wounded in war or sport, and to which the belles retired to whiten their

complexion by wearing off the sunburn in the shade of the banyans and cocoanuts. It was famed in the annals of the *Arioi,* the ancient minstrels of Tahiti, as a scene of orgiastic dances.

"The atoll of Tetiaroa," said Nohea, "had always many cocoanut-trees. The lagoon is as rich in fish as is Takaroa. Never had many people lived there, for it was *tabu,* and only for the *Arii,* the nobles, and the *Arioi.* But now it belongs to the man who takes away teeth from the head, and who hammers gold upon those that remain."

The master diver spun his tale vividly but slowly. Often he repeated the same statement, for the Paumotuan speech, like that of all Polynesia, is a picture language, and iteration and harping is the soul of it, as of the ancient Hebrew chronicles.

Upon my mat and gazing into the expressive eyes of the diver, I recalled what I myself had been told by the owner of Tetiaroa, and, with Nohea's story, pieced together the facts.

Dr. Walter Johnstone Williams, the dentist of Tahiti for twenty years, had, as related Nohea, taken away the teeth of the South Sea Islanders or gilded those which remained. They love those shiny, precious-metal teeth, these children of the tropics, and would give almost anything to gain the golden smile they admired. So when the royal family of Tahiti fell in debt to Dr. Williams, they bartered, in exchange for fillings and pullings, facings and bridges, and for other good and sufficient consideration, the wondrous atoll of Tetiaroa. Upon it the shrewd and skillful dentist found tens of thousands of cocoanut-palms which had grown as volun-

teers in the generous way of tropic verdure, and he himself planted tens of thousands more in order to increase the copra crop. He found a plague of rats, and, being unwilling to expend the large sum that would be needed for the metal bands which would frustrate the rats, he longed for a Pied Piper to lead the pests into the sea. But he bethought himself of the proverbial appetite of the domestic cat for the rat, and, lacking a magic whistler, he advertised for cats, offering to pay a franc for each one brought to his house by the Papeete quay. He had copies of his advertisement struck off on the press and posted upon the trees in and about Papeete, as was the custom.

The result was a flood, a deluge, a typhoon of cats. The Tahitian boy was as eager as his American brother to earn a few coins to spend on luxuries; and so the cats, much like our own in appearance except for their tails, which were curved like a question-mark, came in bags, in boxes, and in nets, while others were personally conducted, yowling, in the arms of the Tahitian youth.

Dentist Williams had not expected so many, and had much trouble in finding places for them to reside until he could remove them to Tetiaroa.

There were cats in his office, cats on the landings, cats in every room, and his garden was a boarding-place of felines. When more than a thousand had been collected, he posted a notice to ward off any further sellers, and, chartering a schooner, hastened with his live cargo to the atoll. There was no necessity of putting down a gangway from the vessel to the little wharf at Tetiaroa, for once she was made fast it needed but

the loosening of their bonds to cause the thousand cats to reach the shore in one bound from the deck.

Of course, the cats set immediately about their pleasant business of catching and eating the rodents. There were tens of thousands of them, perhaps hundreds of thousands, because the island had been little inhabited for many years and the rats had been multiplying unmolested. But with a thousand South Sea Island cats to prey upon them, the easy supply of rats was soon exhausted. Then the cats chased them up and down the trees, in and out of caves and from every refuge, so that there came a day when the last rat was in the maw of a cat.

Meanwhile, with such rich meat diet the cats increased mightily. When the rats were all gone, they were confronted with the problem of existence for uncounted thousands of cats. They might have learned to eat cocoanuts, but they had become such confirmed meat-eaters that they would not abandon their carnal appetites. They did what greed does the world over—what the Russians did recently—they began to eat one another. And they followed the example of industrialism which takes the young in factories.

First toms and tabbies lay in wait for the children of other cats, and soon there was not a kitten left alive, nor could the parents prevent the devouring of their children because of the avid hunger of the adults.

With the kittens gone, began a struggle, with the death of all as the apparent end in view. Swifter and stronger cats slew weaker cats, and the cats which allied themselves in bands, attacked distant strongholds of cats. Slowly and surely went on this internecine

warfare, with the seeming certainty that, if not halted, one day the last two cats on Tetiaroa would face each other in the final contest of prowess. Then one lone cat might remain doomed to certain death from starvation, because there would be no meat left.

Once on a leviathan Atlantic liner, when the usual exterminating process of hydrocyanic gas could not be used, all food was removed, and the rats were left to starve, with a dozen cats to hasten the end. But the rats ate the cats, and then the leather cushions, and finally their weaker brethren, until the last rat died of starvation.

But on Tetiaroa when there were but a few dozen of the quickest, cleverest, and strongest cats remaining, the process suddenly stopped. Atavism, heredity, or the stern battle for life, developed in the survivors unusual intelligence, or they had a return of plain cat-sense. Perhaps they held a powwow, or meow-meow, or whatever a council of cats should be called, and decided upon the one course that would preserve their species. In any event, they saved themselves by ending the warfare. They reverted to the habits of their forefathers, and went fishing. It is as natural for a cat to fish as for a dog to hunt a rabbit. Falconer marked the ferocious jaguars of South America lying in wait upon the shores of the river Plata to seize the fish that passed by the roots of the trees. My goldfish ponds in California were raided by cats many times.

"I myself," said Nohea, "have seen the fisher-cats of Tetiaroa stretched at length on the shores of the lagoon, awaiting their prey. I have seen a mother cat,

with her kittens stringing in a cue behind her, snaring in silence, and with paws fierce to strike, the small fish which come in the eddies of the shallow pools. I have seen the good parent pass a small fish back to her child and smile under her bristling whiskers at her cleverness in providing such fare for her little ones."

The diver ceased speaking, and unrolled his mat. He knelt a moment and prayed, and then he laid him down, and in a moment his deep breathing was informing of his serene slumber.

I lay there a few minutes thinking of his story, of the robber-crabs and the fisher-cats, and above me the vast fronds of the cocoas inclined to and fro, while, doubtless, other industrious crabs, unwarned by their kindred's fate, were climbing for nuts.

CHAPTER VIII

I meet a Seventh-Day Adventist missionary, and a descendant of a mutineer of the Bounty—They tell me the story of Pitcairn island—An epic of isolation.

MAPUHI, though a zealous Mormon, was not illiberal in his posture toward other faiths. In his long years he had entertained a number of them as ways to salvation before the apostles of Salt Lake sent their evangelists to Takaroa. A day or two after landing he brought to Nohea's hut two aliens, whom, he said, I should know, because their language was my own. He introduced them as Jabez Leek, *mahana maa mitinare,* a "Saturday missionary," and Mayhew December Christian, his assistant. They had come to the atoll to dive in living waters for souls. A few words and they were revealed as exceptional men, from far-away places. The Reverend Jabez Leek was my countryman, as were the opposing elders I had met here and at Kaukura. He said, with our half-defiant local pride, that he came from the home of "postum and grape nuts." A divine of the Seventh Day Adventist persuasion, he cheerfully associated diet and religion, as do most sects, the Jews with kosher foods and no pork; the Catholics with abstinence from meat on certain days, and Mormons from alcohol, coffee, and tea; and Protestants with the partaking of the Lord's Supper.

"I am hoping to win for the true Christ a few souls for saving from the lake of fire in that final day," said the Reverend Mr. Leek, with the accent of sincerity. There are few hypocrites among missionaries. They believe in their remedies.

Mapuhi, when Mr. Leek's declaration was interpreted to him by Mayhew December Christian, was stirred. He said so, and the most interesting subject in the world to elderly people the world over—the state of man after death—was discussed eagerly, though with the reserve of proselytizing disputants. They agreed that in Mormonism and Seventh Day Adventism they had in common the personal reign of Christ on earth and prophecy. Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, the pastor from Battle Creek, Michigan, compared with the God-inspired Ellen G. White, who, he said, had led humanity back to the infallibility and perfection of the Bible as the sole rule of life and faith. They both believed in a Supreme God, and that only in the last century, two thousand years after his son had been here in person, God had raised up men and women to conduct sinners to paradise. It had been a revolutionary century in revealed religion. The Battle Creek preacher began to tell of the apocalyptic Mrs. White and her prophetic announcements, and Mapuhi was beginning to prick up his big brown ears when he was called away. The Mormon elders needed him in a conference. The slow, interpreted speech of the minister flowed into rapid English as he directed his words to me and Mr. Christian. The latter was evidently of mixed blood, with Anglo-Saxon features, light-brown hair, dark-blue eyes, but a dark skin and the volup-

tuous mouth of these seas. His voice, too, had a unique timbre, and his English was slightly confused by Polynesian arrangement of sentences.

"God has set his seal upon rebellion for his own purposes," continued Leek. "The conflict with Satan is fiercer every year, but the Lord listens to those who supplicate him. He is proof of his mercy."

He put his hand on the shoulder of Mayhew December Christian.

"The first white settlers in the South Seas were rebels. They were traitors to their king, murderers, and revolters against religion, morals, and society. They were in the hands of Satan, and some of them must perish in the lake of fire after the final judgment. But Christian here is a true sample of the strange way God works out his plans. He is a great-grandson of Fletcher Christian, who led the mutiny of the British ship *Bounty,* and he is a Seventh Day Adventist and a missionary of our denomination."

The mutiny of the *Bounty!* A phrase projects a hazy page of history or raises the curtain upon an almost-forgotten episode. Fletcher Christian! There was a name. They frightened children with it while he was still alive, and it became a synonym for insubordination at sea. A thousand sailors in two generations were spread-eagled or hailed to the mast and given the cat while the offended officer shouted, "You 'd be a damned Christian, would you? I 'll take the Christian out o' you!" He and his desperate gang had committed the most romantically infamous crime of their time, and their story had been for a hundred years singular in the manifold annals of violent deeds in the

tropics. Their rebellion and its outcome was written scarlet in the records of admiralty, and for long was a mysterious study for psychologists, a dreadful illustration to the godly of sin's certain punishment, and the most fascinating of temptations to seamen and adventurers.

The *Bounty* had gone to Tahiti from England to transport breadfruit-trees to the West Indies. George III was on the throne of maritime England, and between the equator and the polar circle his flag flew almost undisputed. Captain Cook had carried home knowledge of the marvelous fruit in Tahiti, "about the size and shape of a child's head, and with a taste between the crumb of wheaten bread and Jerusalem artichoke." The West Indies had only the scarcely wholesome roots of the manioc and cassava as the main food of the African slaves, and their owners believed that if the breadfruit were plentiful there, the negroes would be able to work harder. Lieutenant Bligh, Cook's sailing-master, was despatched with forty-four men in the two-hundred-ton *Bounty* to secure the trees in the Society Islands, and fetch them to St. Vincent and Jamaica. When they at last reached maturity there, the slaves refused to eat them, and another dream of perfection went by the board.

Bligh was a hell-roarer of the quarter-deck, of the stripe less common to-day than then, only because of such mutinies as it prompted. Crowded in a leaky ship, with moldy and scanty provisions, half around Cape Horn, and all around Cape of Good Hope, after twenty-seven thousand miles of sailing, and a year and two months of harsh discipline and depressing lack of

decent food or sufficient water, the green and lovely shores of Tahiti were a haven to the weary tars. They were greeted as heaven-sent, and for six months they ate the fruits of the Isle of Venus, swam in its clear streams, and were made love to by its passionate and free-giving women in its groves. When, with a thousand breadfruit shoots aboard, Bligh ordered up-anchor and away, the contrast between the sweets of the present and the prospect of another year of Bligh's tyranny, with a certainty of poverty in England or hardship at sea, turned the scale against the commander. An attempt to wreck the ship by cutting its cable failed, but the second night of the homeward voyage Fletcher Christian, master's mate, who had made three voyages under Bligh, being in charge of the deck, led a mutiny. Bligh was seized in his bunk, bound, and, with eighteen of the crew who were not in the plot, and a small amount of food and water, set adrift in a small boat. Bligh's party reached Malaysia after overcoming overwhelming dangers and sufferings, and most of them went from there in a merchant's ship to London, where Bligh's account of the mutiny, and his and his loyal men's wanderings, "filled all England with the deepest sympathy, as well as horror of the crime by which they had been plunged into so dreadful a situation." The frigate *Pandora,* with twenty-four guns and 166 fighting men, blessed by bishops, and with a special word from the king, but just temporarily recovered from his recurrent insanity, sailed speedily to "apprehend the mutineers."

Those hearties had meanwhile arranged their own fates. The *Bounty* was now a democracy with Chris-

tian as president, and the vote, after an experiment in another islet, was to go back to the fair ones in the groves of Tahiti. There sixteen of the twenty-five aboard, determined to become landsmen, and, with the joyous shouts and hula harmonies of their native friends, transferred their share of the plunder on the ship to the shore, and went to dancing among the breadfruits. Christian was shrewder. He knew well the long arm of the British monarchy, and warned his shipmates their haven would be but for a little while. They were capering to the pipes of Pan and would not listen, and so with nine Englishmen, six Tahitian men, ten Tahitian belles, and a girl of fifteen, the *Bounty* weighed and steered a course unknown to those who stayed.

These latter weltered in an Elysium of freedom from humiliations, discipline, work, and unrequited cravings for mates, and in a perfection of warmth, delicious viands, exaltation of rank, and amorous damsels. Chiefs adopted them, maidens caressed them, the tender zephyrs healed their vapors, and they were happy; until the *Pandora* arrived, snared them, and took them in chains to England, where they were tried and three hanged in chains at Spithead. The *Pandora* reported that no trace could be found of the *Bounty,* and the most that could be done was to anathematize Christian and the mutineers, and to make the path of the ordinary seaman more thorny, as a deterrent to others.

For twenty-four years England heard nothing of the further movements of the pirates. The new generation forgot them, but Christian's name lingered as a threat and a curse. The ship and crew disappeared as completely as though at the bottom of the sea; and when

their refuge finally was disclosed, horrifying and also wonderfully poignant chapters were added to the log of the *Bounty,* and one of the most curious and affecting conditions of humanity brought to light. The bare outline of all this is in every Pacific chronography, but one must have heard its obscure intricacies from a scion of a participant to appreciate fully their lights and shadows. Mayhew December Christian told me these, and the Reverend Jabez Leek commented and pointed the moral.

"My great grandfatheh want go farthes' from Engalan'," said Mayhew, "and he look on chart of *Bounty* an' fin' small islan' not printed but jus' point of pencil made by cap'in where English ship some years before find. It was call' Pitcairn for midshipman who firs' see it from mas.' He steer there an' in twenty-three day *Bounty* arrive. That where I was born."

Not by any spelling or clipping of letters could I convey the speech and accent of the islander, English, Tahitian, and American,—Middle Western,—combined into a peculiar *patois,* soft at times, and strident at others, with admixture of Tahitian words. He went on to tell how his ancestor and his companions looked with hope at the land which must give them safety or death. They reached the shore through a rocky inlet and rough breakers, and, on finding stone images, hatchets, and traces of heathen temples, were cast down by fear of savages. But as days passed, and they gradually wandered over the entire island without trace of any present inhabitants, they felt secure. Its smallness in that vast and then trackless waste of waters below the line reassured them of its insignificance to mariners or

rulers, it being only five miles long by two wide, and with no harbor or protected bay. Rugged in outline, and uninviting from the deck, with peaks and precipices sheer and sterile-looking, the mutineers were gladdened to walk through forests of beautiful and useful trees, with fruit and grasses for making native clothes; and about its borders to be able to catch an abundance of fish and crustaceans.

They drove and warped the ship into the inlet against the cliff, and fastened it by a cable to a mighty tree, and in a few weeks removed everything useful to the upland where they pitched their first camp. Christian, with the determination and foresight that saved his group from the ignominious end of those who would not abjure the ease of Tahiti, insisted on burning the *Bounty*, to remove all indication of their origin to visitors, and, doubtless, to make impossible belated efforts to desert their sanctuary. They lived in tents made of the canvas until they built houses from the ship's planks, and these among the spreading trees so that they were completely unseen from the sea. They had ample provisions from the stores until they could raise a crop of vegetables, and the plants they brought might supplement those indigenous. The island was covered with luxurious growths, there was water, and they extracted salt from pools among the rocks. They parceled out all the land among the Englishmen, and each with his Tahitian wife set up his own home. The Tahitian men helped different ones in their building and cultivation, and in peace and comparative plenty they began one of the most startling experiments of mankind.

Nine Englishmen, mostly rude sailors, with ten Tahi-

tian women and a girl, and six Tahitian men,—unevenly divided as to sex, whites and Polynesians unable to converse except meagerly, with totally different inheritance and habits,—were there as the experimenters, with no restraint upon passions or covetings except the feeble check of mutual interests. A hamlet in the ripest civilization has difficulty to govern by these. Compromise through a supposed expression of the will of the majority in elections has become an accepted solvent, but in reality the determined and organized minority wins usually. On Pitcairn, as in Eden, a woman caused the failure. After two years of associated achievement, the wife of Williams, a mutineer, having fallen to death from a cliff while gathering sea-birds' eggs, that subject of King George demanded and was awarded the wife of a Tahitian comrade. The committee of the whole, Anglo-Saxon whole, in contemplation of their own naked souls, could not deny Williams. The woman left the hut of her husband and shared the couch of the victor in the award. There was no appeal, for the supreme court, as in America, was final, no matter what the congress of the people wished. The lady was complacent, but the cuckolded Tahitian got together his color majority and protested. He was told to nurse his wrath in hell, and the court administered summary sentences to all who disputed its power or equity. Timiti had murmured, but, as mere treason was too sublimated a charge, they brought another against him, and the tribunal was assembled, with the entire citizenry as witnesses and auditors. Christian walked up and down in the house as evidence was offered, and once, as he turned, Timiti, sure of the court's finding, flew

out of the door. He escaped to the other shore of the island, but after weeks was decoyed by false promises and murdered as his deceivers combed his tangled hair, a sign of friendship.

The remaining Tahitian males formed a committee of vigilance, and voted to rid the island of the entire supreme court. Its members were saved from immediate assassination by their wives, who, in the way of women on continent and islet, loved them because they were the fathers of their children. Moreover, since Cook claimed as paramour in Hawaii the Princess Lelemahoalani, dark women have been fired by ambition for social and environmental climbing on a white family tree. The wives of the English in Pitcairn were able to inform their husbands through the gossip of the wives of the Tahitians, who also sided with the whites. One carried her adherence far enough to murder her spouse while he slept. Life was made fearful for these wives, and once they constructed a raft and were beyond the breakers to sail to Tahiti or oblivion, when the Englishmen's women's wailing and pleading induced them to return. For months more it was touch and go as to survival. Murder stalked hourly, and the oppression of the whites became that of masters towards slaves. Then the Tahitians crept into their huts and secured the firearms, and with these hunted down the Europeans. They killed first John Williams, the successful litigant, and then Fletcher Christian, the chief justice, and, quickly, John Mills, Isaac Martin, and William Brown. William McCoy, John Quintal, and John Adams were fleet enough to reach the woods, and Edward Young, midshipman of the *Bounty*, beloved of all the women, was

Photo from Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

The church on Pitcairn Island

Photo from Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

The shores of Pitcairn Island

secreted by them. John Adams when hunger-pressed showed himself, and was shot and badly wounded. He ran to the bluff above the sea, and was about to hurl himself to destruction when induced to refrain by his pursuers, whose hearts failed them. Adams, Young, McCoy, and Quintal, but a quartet of the nine mutineers, remained, and five of the six Tahitian men. The latter had cut down the four to a minority of the male populace, and were delighted to swear eternal amity. Adams recovered, and, at a midnight session, the whites released themselves from their oaths and decreed the wiping out of every male but themselves. They swore as allies the widows of the other sailors, and, as fast as dark opportunity offered, the decree was executed. They were, shortly, the only men.

Now was a second chance for peace and success. The experiment of putting together without higher authority a band of white men with women and slaves as spoils had miscarried. The inferior tribesmen were finished, but there were four of the higher race, and eleven native women, still subjects for further probation. One would say for certain that on that lonely speck of land, having glutted any blood lust, and with twelve of their number already dead, these four men of the same race, religion, and profession would get along somehow. It was not to be.

"McCoy," said Mayhew December Christian, "liked to drink liquor. Before he was a seaman he worked in a distillery in England, and on Pitcairn he distilled *ti* leaves in his tea-kettle. They all had drunk his alcohol, and it had been a factor in the quarrels. He got worse as he became older, and he and Quintal kept up a

continuous spree until the devil gripped McCoy for his own, and McCoy tied a rock around his waist and leaped into the sea. Three whites were left, and Quintal had learned nothing from the past. He drank the *ti* liquor, and when his wife came from fishing with too few fish he bit off her ear. When she fell from the cliff and was drowned, Quintal, with all the other women to choose from, demanded the wife of one of his two shipmates. He made terrible threats against both of them, and they knew he meant what he said."

In the first case since its institution the court of Pitcairn divided. Adams and Young, taunted by the continuing insults of Quintal to their matrimonial integrity, and faced with the probability of extinction unless they acted vigorously, seceded from the minority. They deluded Quintal into a momentary incautiousness when the recurrent insistence of his demand was being quarreled over in the presence of the entire community, and butchered him with a hatchet.

"I heard the daughter of John Mills, an old woman, relate the incident," said Mayhew. "They were gathered together, children and all, in Adams's house, when he and Young jumped upon Quintal and chopped him to pieces. The blood was everywhere, she said, and we grew up with a song about it. My mother used to croon it to me on her lap."

Young, midshipman, of gentle breeding, and a serious man at his lightest, faded away, and in his last, melancholy days, uttered the name of God. Convinced that Adams would not strike him down, he gave way to a conviction of sin, the remembrance of his childhood at home. He died begging for mercy, which

Adams assured him would be granted to a contrite heart. They laid him in a grave upon the land he had cultivated, and over him was said the first word of funeral sermon pronounced in Pitcairn. John Adams, the preacher, of the fifteen males who had sailed in the *Bounty* from Tahiti, was sole survivor. Fourteen had perished, thirteen violently, in the search for happiness and freedom from restraint. Man had almost annihilated his brother.

John Adams had a dream in which it was pointed out to him that upon his head was not merely the blood of the many who had been murdered, but that the bodies and souls of the innocents remaining were in his care.

"Thou art thy brother's keeper," said the scroll in his vision. He counted his human kind. The feud had swallowed fourteen strong and wilful men, but nature, as it had allowed their crops to grow and their trees to become fruitful, had preserved eight of the women, and their fertility had given twenty-three children to the mutineers. Christian had fathered three, McCoy three, Quintal the bold, five, Young six, Mills two, and Adams four. Adams drew about him these thirty-one beings, and commenced a new regimen. He forswore the democracy of Pitcairn, and in the sweat of his soul dedicated the island to the God of the Bible and prayer-book that had molded on a shelf until then. In tears and with vows he gathered his flock about him and daily and nightly expounded to them verses and read them prayers. He did not lose sight of the material needs in his flinging himself on the compassion of heaven, but gave every one a task and saw that it was done. He taught the children English from these, the only books saved,

and it was not the least of his accomplishments that he was able to make his language theirs, for their mothers knew nothing of it. The thirty-two became one family, the eight widows looking upon him as their father, as did the little ones. Morning and evening, and all Sunday, a stream of prayers for their welfare and salvation was directed by him toward the seat of the Almighty, and the theocracy of Pitcairn waxed fat and sweet. With one head, and many hands, yearly increasing as the children grew, they perfected their fields and bowers, their fewer houses and their gear, and, born into the environment, the adolescents became marvelously adapted to its necessities. When the scene was unveiled to the outer world, it would have needed a Rousseau to describe its felicity.

Captain Mayhew Folger, a sealer from Boston, commanding the *Topaz,* lifted the curtain twenty years after the mutiny and ten years after Adams had become its sole survivor. He sailed to Pitcairn to look for seals, and offshore was hailed in English by three youths in a boat who offered him cocoanuts, and told him an Englishman was there. He landed, and was received with warm hospitality. He put down Adams's statement in the *Topaz's* log, with the comment that whatever his crimes in the past, he was now "a worthy man, and might be useful to navigators who traverse this immense ocean." He also recorded that Adams gave him hogs, cocoanuts, and plantains.

England did not gain a clue to the "mystery of the *Bounty*" through the *Topaz* log. Captain Folger tarried a day at Pitcairn, and his ship was confiscated at Valparaiso shortly afterwards by the Spanish governor

of Chile. Young America and England were not close friends, and their navies and merchant marines were at odds. Six years elapsed before even the British admiralty knew the facts. They were gained on an expedition of immense interest to Americans. Captain Porter, of the Yankee navy, had been not long before in the Marquesas Islands, to which he had taken prize ships captured in the war between Great Britain and the United States, and where he had flown the American flag in token of possession, and killed many helpless natives to indicate his power. The British captured Porter in the *Essex,* undid at Nuku-Hiva what he had done, and did it over in the name of King George. Bound from the Marquesas to Chile, Captain Staines of the *Briton* unexpectedly sighted Pitcairn and was confounded at the signs of human life in huts and laid-out fields, but more so when Thursday October Christian and George Young shouted from a small boat to "throw them a rope." Invited aboard the *Briton* and put at table, they asked a blessing in English, and said they had been taught by John Adams of the *Bounty* to reverence God in every act. The *Briton* commander, amazed at this apparition of civilization from the ghostly past, put ashore a party, and investigated the colony of forty-eight. The stupified Pitcairn folk were afraid that Adams would be taken prisoner, and he doubtless would have been except for the pleadings of the young, and especially of Adams's "beautiful grown daughter." The captain stayed a few hours and reported to the admiralty in England the answer to the *Bounty* riddle, and that never in his lifetime had he seen such a model settlement or such virtuous and happy people.

England was at war with Napoleon, and left Adams to time. Ten years later came a British whaler, and Adams confessed himself old to its captain. He begged for a helper in governing his commonwealth, and especially in teaching them. The captain assembled the crew and asked for a volunteer. John Buffet, twenty-six, cabinet-maker, twice shipwrecked, and a lover of his fellow, stepped out and was accepted. He knew that it meant years of isolation from Europe, but that was what he had craved in his rovings. When his ship was ready to sail, Johnny Evans, nineteen, Buffett's chum, was missing. He had hidden in a hollow stump. The community was obliged to receive him. And so two white men, fresh from Europe, became members of a family of several score half-breeds who, in an idyllic simplicity and a gentle savagery, had lived for years undisturbed by a foreign or dissentient element, and who in their common affection and openness of heart were remindful of the Christians of the catacombs. The second period of Pitcairn was ended.

It continued as a secluded handful of people, but new theocracies began to govern them. God had been always their dependence and lord paramount, but his vicegerents had guided them in tortuous paths toward his throne.

The Reverend Jabez Leek, who had often supplied links in the chain which had led the relation of Mayhew December Christian from the mutiny to the coming of Buffett and Evans, said this:

"I was induced to go to Pitcairn by the devotion of one of its sons to the place of his birth," he explained. "I met him in California. He was a young man, and

one of the few Pitcairners who had ever been to America. He had voyaged to England as a sailor on a ship that had touched at Pitcairn, and was trying to return home. That seemed impossible. Twice he had shipped on vessels bound for Australia, with promises to land him if the wind permitted, and once had sighted his island, but his ships were driven past both times, and he had been forced to go half-way round the world on them. He told me that he had left home in order to earn money to start married life better. He had engaged himself to a Pitcairn girl, and, as is the custom there, the marriage day was put three years away. It was already two years and a half since he had departed. He had not the means to charter a ship,—that would have cost thousands,—and his health was fast going. Just homesickness. It was nothing else. The doctors said there was nothing the matter with his body, but he got weaker. There was no ship offering, and I doubt if he could have passed muster, but daily he examined the shipping lists, and often went to the docks and offices to get a chance. It was he who told me about Pitcairn and its God-fearing people, and he first introduced me to the true religion of Christ. He was a sincere Seventh Day Adventist, and confident of the coming of Christ on earth and of his own salvation. It was pitiful to see him fail. We lodged in the same house, and I talked to him daily. He said that when he saw Pitcairn receding in the distance after seven months on the *Silverhorn,* he could not leave the rail of the ship, and remained there when night came peering into the darkness until at dawn he had to take up his duties. His only hope was in God, but he was destined to wait

until the first resurrection, unknowing time or space, until he comes before the judgment of God. As the day set for his marriage came nearer, he abandoned desire to live past it, and the only sorrow he had was that his sweetheart could not know his inability to keep his troth. He died the day before the three years expired, and in his last moments advised me that God had made him the channel through which the truth of religion might be made known to me. His death opened my eyes, and I accepted the gospel.

"I studied for our ministry, and, with service in other fields, I was fortunate enough to be chosen to go to Pitcairn after expressing my earnest desire to see God's will and power shown in such manifest ways. Our denomination had its own missionary vessel, the *Pitcairn,* doing the Master's work in these seas, and I went on it. On the thirty-third day we came to Bounty Bay and anchored, and in the boat that put off to greet us, besides two of our own elders, was this young man, great-grandson of the Fletcher Christian who had, we fear, died without knowing God's mercy. I remained on Pitcairn a long time, a fruitful, peaceful span, for all there were devout members of our church, and God had blessed them greatly in faith and works. They had not been without religious trials, though, and it was only in 1886 that they received the gift of the truth. Buffett, the young Englishman upon whom Adams put the teaching, married Midshipman Young's daughter, Dorothy; and Evans, John Adams's girl, Rachel. They were there a half dozen years when George Hun Nobbs arrived with an American named Bunker. They came from Chile in a yawl. Nobbs had heard there the

Bounty story, and was so excited over it that he induced Bunker to start out with him for Pitcairn in a small boat. Nobbs said he was the son of a Marquis, and soon claimed the hand of Sarah Christian, the mutineer's granddaughter. Bunker tried for her sister, Peggy, and when she refused, threw himself from a cliff, as McCoy had done long before. Nobbs built a house out of the lumber of his boat, and, because he was the best educated man, took Buffett's place as schoolmaster. Buffett was angry, but the people chose Nobbs because Buffett had fallen once into a very terrible sin. Everybody knew it, and though he had repented bitterly, it was remembered. Then John Adams died after forty years on Pitcairn, and thirty of contrition, and Nobbs became pastor, too.

"A tremendous change came about then. Tahiti was controlled by the London Protestant missionaries; and they made an arrangement with the Pitcairners to give them land, and transportation to Tahiti. Every one was moved to Tahiti, and Pitcairn left uninhabited. In Papeete they saw for the first time in their lives, money, immorality, saloons, vile dances, gambling, and scarlet women. Buffett and his family returned within a few weeks, and after fourteen had died of fever, a schooner was chartered to take all back. It was paid for by the copper stripped from the *Bounty,* which had been carried to Tahiti. Back in their old homes, all was not as before. Adams had never broken the still used by McCoy and Quintal, and it began to be more active. Nobbs and Buffett, though good men, liked a drop of the *ti* juice, and there was a let-down in strict morality. Things were at a pass when Joshua Hill arrived. In

England he had learned about Pitcairn, and through Hawaii and Tahiti had come a roundabout route. Hill pretended to have been deputized by the British Government, and declared he was the governor and pastor, both. He fired out Nobbs from the church and school, and made no bones of what he thought of Buffett and Evans, the other Englishmen. Hill was past seventy, but he had his way. Nobbs, Buffet, and Evans were supported by Charles Christian, Fletcher's son, but Hill ruled with an iron hand. He had Buffett beaten with a cat-o'-nine-tails in public, and announced that he was going to reform Pitcairn if he had to flog every person. He quoted Jesus's action in the temple, and when he heard that several of the women had been talking about his own dereliction, he called everybody in prayer to judge them. His own prayer was:

" 'O Lord, if these women die the common death of all men, thou hast not sent me.' "

"This was going too far, and there were no amens, which made Hill furious. I have heard this from one who was present. When he learned about Buffett's sin, and that it had been concealed from him, he made up his mind to give Buffett an unforgettable lesson with a whip. Then he put the three whites on the first vessel touching Pitcairn, and exiled them. This was the straw that broke Hill's rule. A schooner captain brought back the trio, and they and others opposed Hill. An elder's daughter took some yams that did not belong to her, and at her trial Hill said she should be executed for her crime. The father indignantly opposed any severe sentence. Hill, who had felt his authority lessening, rushed into his room and returned

with a sword, and shouted out for the father to confess his sins as he intended to kill him immediately. A grandson of Quintal, who had bitten his wife's ear off, leaped over a table, and though he threw Hill down, he could not prevent Hill from stabbing him many times. Others came to his rescue, and Hill was disarmed. He was soon deported, as the Englishmen had written to the British admiralty in Chile about his madness, and a war vessel came to quiet things. Nobbs took hold again, and when our missionary came, they were ready for the real word of God. Within two weeks they all had given up Sunday as the Sabbath and were keeping Saturday, the Seventh Day, the Sabbath instituted at the end of creation, and the day Christ and his apostles rigidly observed. I loved the Pitcairn brethren. When my time came to go into other fields, I brought with me Mayhew December Christian, who had been selected for his understanding of our beliefs and his spiritual growth."

The Reverend Mr. Leek stopped, and Nohea, who had awakened with a start from a fitful slumber, said loudly, *"Amene!"*

"You should read the account of Pitcairn by Buffett's granddaughter," said the minister. "Mayhew, we will sing before we go to sleep our hymn of Pitcairn, fifth and last verses!"

The descendant of the arch-mutineer led in a mellow baritone, which Mr. Leek supported in a firm bass:

"We own the depths of sin and shame,
Of guilt and crime from which we came;
Thy hand upheld us from despair,
Else we had sunk in darkness there.

"Thou know'st the depths from whence we sprung;
Inspire each heart, unloose each tongue,
That all our powers may join to bless
The Lord, our strength and righteousness."

When they had said good night, I felt as sinful as Mary Magdalene; and Nohea, though the words were Greek to him, sensed their meaning, and before taking to his mat knelt and groaned deeply.

CHAPTER IX

The fish in the lagoon and sea—Giant clams and fish that poison—Hunting the devil-fish—Catching bonito—Snarling turtles—Trepang and sea cucumbers—The mammoth manta.

THE schooner *Marara* unloaded her cargo of supplies after several days of riding on and off the lee of the island, and went on her voyage to other atolls. McHenry and Kopcke joined interests for the nonce, and tried to draw me into the net they said they were spreading for the natives. I was convinced that I was as edible fish for them as the Paumotuans, and, besides, I was determined to avail myself of the leisure of the wise Nohea before the *rahui,* to learn all about the fish in the lagoon and sea. An ignorant amateur of the life of the ocean, I was devoured with curiosity to peer into it under his guidance, and I was resolute to spend my days in such sport instead of in sleep after roistering of nights with the traders.

"Nohea," I said, "will you show me what the Creator has put in the water? In my country I know the fish, but not here. Soon you will go to the *rahui,* but we have a few weeks yet, and you are skilled in these matters."

The diver replied, "*E,* I will show you"; and he kept his word, with a prideful exactitude. Days and nights I returned dog-weary, from the sea and the lagoon, but never once threw myself on my mat and counted my

pains for naught, as scores of times I had on the brooks, bays, and oceans of America. With our variety of edibles in islands and continents where there are real soil and domestic animals of many kinds, we can hardly appreciate the desperate necessity of the Paumotuans to comb the waters of their bare atolls for food.

The pig, the only domestic mammifer before the whites came a century ago, ate only cocoanuts, and, like fowls, was generally small and thin, as well as too expensive for other meals than feasts. Few were the birds in these white islands. In many only the sandpiper, the frigate, the curlew, and the tern were found, but in uninhabited atolls others abounded. I saw many pigeons, black with rusty spots which lived in the *tohonu* tree and ate its seeds and also those of the *nono*. Green pigeons or doves, called *oo,* were sometimes seen. None of these constituted any part of the diet.

Except for cocoanuts, the atoll yielded few growths of value. The most characteristic was a small tree or bush with white flowers, the *mikimiki,* the wood of which was very dense. It grew even in the most solid coral blocks, and was formerly much used for the great shark-hooks, for harpoons, and handles for their shovels of shells. The *huhu,* another little tree, with yellow blossoms and the general appearance of the *mikimiki,* was useless for timber, but the *kahia,* with deliciously-perfumed flowers, made an excellent fuel. The *geogeo* furnished boat-knees, the *tou* was fit for canoes, and the *pandanus,* the screw-pine, filled almost as many needs as the cocoanut-palm. Its fruit was eaten by poor islanders, its wood and leaves formed their houses, its leaves also made mats and hats and

the sails of the *pahi,* the sailing canoes, and, as throughout Polynesia, the wrappers of cigarettes. All the clothing was formerly made of this prince of trees for native wants. The *tamanu* was scarce, and *purau;* but there were some herbaceous plants, the *cassytha filiformis,* which climbed on the *huhu* and the *miki-miki;* a little *lepturus repens;* a heliotrope; a cruciferous plant, and a purslane that afforded a poor salad, and was also boiled. I also saw the *nono,* not here the arrow of Cupid as in Tahiti, but a sour fruit, eaten only when hunger compelled.

In Takaroa, particularly favored by absence of cyclones, by safety of harbor, breadth and depth of pass into the lagoon, and plentitude of cocoa-palms and pearl-shell, herculean efforts had been made by bringing whole schooner cargoes of soil to grow some of the food plants and trees of Tahiti, but all such growths were a trivial item in the daily demand for sustenance.

When Polynesians in their legends spoke of a rich island, they described it as abounding in fish, as the Jews, pastoral tribes, sang of milk and honey, the red Indian of happy hunting-grounds, and Christians of streets of gold, and harps and hymns.

Shell-fish, mollusks and crustaceans, played as important a part in their aliment as ordinary fish, and *ia* or *ika* meant both. In some islands the people were forced to subsist largely on *taclobo,* the furbelowed clam or giant *tridacna* called *pahua* here and *benitier* in Europe, where the shells were used for holy water fonts. The flesh of the *pahua* was sold in the Papeete market but was not a delicacy. The clam itself weighed up to fifty pounds or more, and the pair of shells

from a dozen to eight hundred pounds according to the age of the living clams. The shells were so hard that they furnished the blades of the shovels with which the native had anciently dug wells to hold the brackish water.

"The *pahua* is also a devil," said Nohea. "In the lagoon he lies with his shells open to catch his prey. Many a shark has torn off his tail in trying to get free when the *pahua* has closed on him, or has died in the trap. When a young man, I put my hand into a shell not bigger than your face, and it shut upon it. I was feeling for pearl-shell under fifty feet of water. I could not reach the threads that anchor the clam to the rock because it was in a crevice. If I could have cut them I could have freed myself, but I was able after a minute to force my knife beside my hand and stab the *pahua* so that it let me go. Paumotuans have often lost their lives in the *pahua's* shells, and one cut off his fingers and left them to the fish. I always drive my knife into him, and then cut the cord that ties him to the rock. They are hard to lift,—the big *pahua,*—and often we must leave them. Sometimes they have pearls in them that are very fine—not like oyster-pearls, but just like the white inside of the clam-shell itself, which is like the marble of the tombstone of Mapuhi's wife."

Nohea rubbed me every day with the oil from the robber-crab's tail, and my wounds healed quickly, although the scars remained. He said that Paumotuans died of coral poisoning, but usually recovered, unless their blood was tainted by *tona,* the syphilis brought originally by the white, and which the Paumotuan cured

Photo by Brown Bros.

Spearing fish

Photo by Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

A canoe on the lagoon

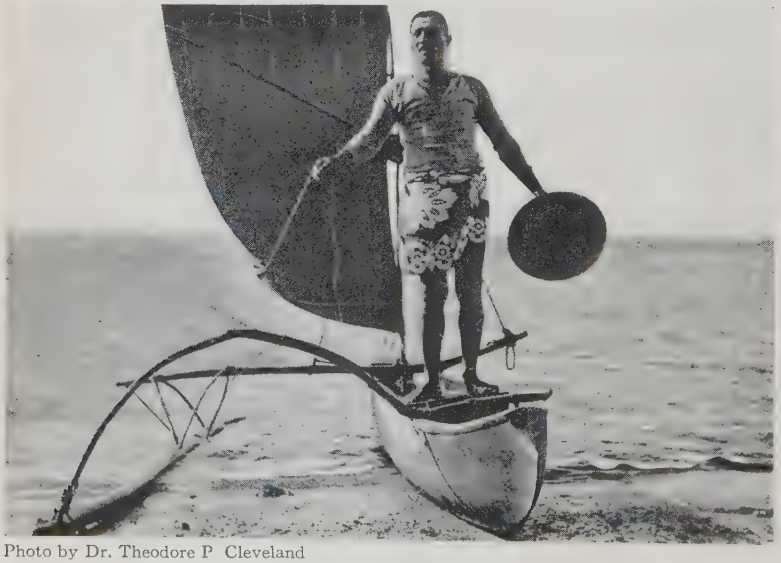

Photo by Dr. Theodore P Cleveland

Ready for the fishing

with native remedies. He pointed to a species of corals which stung one if touched. The stony branches or plates when fresh from the water had a harsh feeling and a bad smell, but were not slimy. They pricked me when pressed against my arm, and the sting lasted from a few minutes to half an hour, with different specimens. The sensation was as painful as from nettles or the *Physalia,* the Portuguese man-of-war. One coral, sulphurous or dark in color, Nohea warned me not to touch, saying it would cause my hand and arm to swell for days. There was a jellyfish, he said, the *keakea,* that in certain months, January, February, and March, almost filled the lagoon, and they stung so fiercely, especially about the eyes, that diving ceased as soon as they appeared.

There were fish, too, that were deadly to eat, some at one time and some at another, as fish venomous in one lagoon were innocuous in another. Some isles were blessed by having no poisonous fish, as Hao, Amanu, Negonego, Marokau, Hikueru, Vahitahi, Fakahina, and Pukapuka. Marutea of the north, Raraka, Kauehi, Katiu, Makemo, Takume, Moruroa, and Marutea of the south, were cursed by the opposite condition. In Rangira only the *haamea* of the pass was hurtful. The *meko* was the most feared fish at Marutea of the south, occasioning a terrible dysentery with cramps, which ended in vertigo and extreme weakness. Mullets, also, were often harmful in certain lagoons, and the *muraena* killed.

What made these fish poisonous? Science guessed that the larvæ of the coral animals were the cause. These fish ate the coral, and it was noticed that in De-

cember, January, and February, at the time the corals expelled their larvæ,—were in blossom, as the expression went,—the toxicity of the fish was highest. Other fish were made poisonous by eating the sea-centipede, curious creatures which looked like yards of black string and wound themselves around the corals. They had thousands of minute legs.

While all land-crabs were safe to eat, certain sea-crabs were injurious, one in particular, a stark white species, which was death to swallow, and which despairing Paumotuans had bolted as a suicide potion. Even certain starfish must be avoided, one, a lovely cone-shaped kind, being deadly, their barbs injecting a virulent poison which speedily dilated the arm and then the body hugely, and made the heart stop beating. To the native such illnesses were awesome mysteries, yet he had learned ages ago to distinguish the baneful fishes by the empire path of pain and death which all races have trod toward safety from the enemies of mankind. His more open foes, whom he hunted for food, the native met fearlessly, and fought with adroitness.

The devilfish, or octopus, frequented mostly the outside of the reef and preyed on mollusks and crustaceans, being naturally timid and inoffensive, though capable of affrighting attack when molested. They commonly took up their abode in some cavern or crevice, and lay safely ensconced in the shadow, simulating the color of their surroundings so artfully that their victims hardly ever saw them until grasped by the suckers of the many long, muscular arms.

"In Samoa," said Nohea, when we went to a certain

spot to seek out the devilfish, "is the *Fale o le Fe'e,* the House of the Octopus. It is very large, with black basalt walls, and has a pillar in the center. It was built to guard against the tribe of giants who once traded with Samoa."

The devilfish was, as I said, at most times shy and harmless but, when roused, the most dangerous of antagonists. We met one at close quarters the third time we paddled to the caves or recesses in the coral rock. It was near sunset, and there were already black shadows about the ledge, which at low tide disclosed the niches wrought in it by the action of the water. In one of these I saw two fiery eyes with white rims as big as dinner-plates, and Nohea said to beware, that they belonged to an enormous *fe'e.* Nahea had a mighty spear or grain with three points of solid iron, and a heavy, long shaft, on a rope attached to the prow of the canoe. Better still I carried a rifle with bullets that would kill a wild bull. Nohea steered the canoe up to the nook and thrust out a long, light stick toward the glittering eyes. The cuttlefish threw out one tentacle upon it. Nohea teased him as one might tease a cat, and another tentacle took hold. Again the stick was manipulated, and finally, after half an hour, ten arms were fastened tightly upon the rod. Nohea gently drew the rod toward him, and the *fe'e* emerged from his den, so that, though the light was growing dim, I was able for a minute to survey him in the fullest detail, as I sat with my rifle to my shoulder.

His body, bigger than a barrel, was like a dirty gray bag, with one end three-cornered for use as a steering-fin, or rudder. His mouth was like an opening in a

sack, with a thick, circular lip and a great parrot-like beak, which was almost hidden at the moment. His tentacles were in a circle around the mouth, and were large at the trunk and tapering to the ends. Two main arms with which he supported himself against the rock were twice as long as the others, and differently formed. The fiery eyes were serpent-like, and set back of the arms.

"If he were not so strong I would jump on him now that I have his tentacles engaged, and would bite the back of his neck till he died," said Nohea, with anger. "I have slain many that way. But this one would destroy me in a moment. Once we hooked one by mistake when we were fishing for barracuda from a canoe. My companion hauled him to the side of the canoe, when the octopus threw his arms about him and pulled him into the sea. I sprang after him, and put my thumbs in the eyes of the beast. He moaned and cried, and covered us with his black fluid; but he let go, and fled, blinded."

The octopus was regarding us with apparent calm. The rod he held was twenty-five feet in length, so that our canoe was more than twenty feet from his eyes. Nohea now agitated the rod, and the *fe'e* retained his grasp, but began to change from a slaty gray to red, with black mottlings.

"He is enraged," said Nohea, warningly. "Prepare to shoot if the *tavero* fails!"

He stood up in the canoe, and, resting the bamboo rod on the gunwale, poised his spear. The devilfish felt the menace of his attitude, and his two longest tentacles began to writhe in the air, as he measured

our distance. Then Nohea, with a step back, launched the grain, and with so true an aim that it penetrated the eye of the grisly creature and half unbalanced him. Instantly the air was filled with the cloud of sepia he ejected,—a confession of defeat,—and the terrible arms with their twisting, coiling tips were thrust at us in lightning movements. But Nohea had seized a paddle, and parted us by thirty feet. The *fe'e* was pulled into the water, but was not yet dead. He struggled as if drowning, the great arms rising and falling upon the surface, and a direful groaning issuing with the bubbles that covered the surface. I fired twice at his bulk seen clearly in the water, and after ten minutes it relaxed utterly. A musky, delicious odor filled the air.

With immense difficulty we brought his abhorrent corpse partly upon the ledge to measure it, and to cut off some of the tentacles for broiling. Nohea said it weighed a thousand pounds, but that he had seen one that weighed two tons, and whose arms stretched seventy feet. The two longest limbs of our octopus were rounded from the body to within two feet of their tips, when they flattened out like blades. Along the edges were rows of suckers, each with a movable membrane across it. When these suckers fastened on an object, the membrane reacted and made a vacuum under each sucker. Nohea explained that wherever the suckers touched one's flesh it puckered and blistered, and two months would elapse before it healed. He showed me scars upon his own skin. Our octopus had two thousand and more suckers on its tentacles.

"In Japan," I told Nohea, "I have seen the men at

night sink in the sea earthenware jars, very tall and stout, and in the morning find them occupied each by a devilfish, who must have thought them suitable to its condition in life."

We had other methods of catching the *fe'e*. One was to tie many pieces of shell on a large stick with the pointed ends up, and from our canoe to strike the water with this. The resulting noise or vibration attracted the octopi, who thought the bait alive, and, eager to examine, threw themselves upon it and were killed and hoisted aboard. Nohea would strike the canoe sometimes with his paddle in a rhythmical manner, and draw them to hear the concert, when he would spear them.

At the rookeries of the hair seals on Puget Sound, bounty hunters lure these destroyers of salmon nets and traps, by the wailing of a fiddle string, the wheeze of an accordian, a hymn upon a mouth organ, or almost any musical note. The hair seal rises to the surface to listen to the entrancing notes, and is shot by the hunter from his boat.

The smaller devilfish Nohea eviscerated and ate, or gave to his friends. I could not look at them as food. The sepia still contained in their sacs he dried for bait for small-mouthed fish, and we used also the bellies of hermit-crabs, the tentacles of squid, and the tails of various kinds of fish. For the larger, scaled fish, Nohea preferred hooks of *mikimiki,* which he carved from the bushes, or of turtle-shell or whalebone, though the stores had the modern ones of steel. For *bonito* we used only the pearl-hook without barb, and, of course, unbaited. The advantage of the barbless hook

—that is, lacking the backward-projecting point which makes extraction difficult—could, perhaps, be appreciated only by seeing our way of fishing.

When we came into a school of *bonito* pursuing flying-fish, I took the paddle, and Nohea, with a fifteen-foot *purau* rod, and a line as long, trailed the *pa,* the pearly hook, on the surface, so that it skipped and leaped as does the *marara.* When a *bonito* took the lure, Nohea with a dexterous jerk raised the fish out of the water, and brought it full against his chest. He hugged it to him a second and, without touching the hook, threw it hard into the bottom of the canoe where I could strike it sharply over the head with the edge of my paddle. The whole manœuver was a continuous motion on Nohea's part. The fish seized the hook, the rod shot up straight, the *bonito* came quickly to his bosom, he embraced it, and, with no barb to release, it slipped off the bone into his powerful grip, and was hurled upon the hard wood. Thus no time was lost, and the hook was in the water in another instant. Once or twice when I failed in my part the *bonito* raised itself on the end of its tail, and shot through the air to its element. That Nohea was not hurt by the fish when they were brought bang against his chest, can be explained only by his dexterity, which doubtless avoided the full impact of the heavy blow. The *bonito* weighed from thirty to a hundred pounds.

The turtle-shell for the hooks Nohea got from the turtles which he caught. They were a prime dish in the Paumotus, especially the great green turtle. The very word for turtle, *honu,* meant also to be gorged, associating the reptile itself with feasting. The thought

of turtle caused Nohea, a fairly abstemious man, to water at the mouth and to rub his stomach in concentric circles, as if aiding in its digestion. The *honu* was in the days of heathenry sacred to high livers, the priests and chiefs, and was eaten with pomp and circumstance; to make sure of their husbanding, they were, in the careful way of the old Maoris, taboo to women and children under pain of death. An old cannibal chief was called the Turtle Pond because he had a record of more than a hundred humans eaten by him. Turtles were of two hundred species, and were found six feet long and weighing eight hundred pounds, but more ordinarily in the Paumotus from a hundred to four hundred. After a feast the pieces of turtle meat were put into cocoanut-shells, with the liquid fat poured over them, and sealed with a heated leaf, for a reserve, as we put up mince-meat.

The best season for turtles was when the Matariki, the Pleiades, rose in the east, and the time of egg-laying arrived. Then the turtles came from long journeys by sea, and looked for a place to deposit their eggs far from the haunts of humans. They came two by two, like proper married folk, and, leaving the husband on the barrier-reef, the wife, alone, dug a hole from one to two feet in depth in the coral sand, above the high-water mark, and in it scooped a deeper and smaller pipe, to lay five or six score eggs, white and rough, like enlarged golf-balls. The moon was usually full when this most important deed of the turtle's career was done with intense secrecy. The sand was painstakingly replaced and smoothed, and the wife swam back to the reef and

at high tide touched flippers again with her patient spouse. The operation occupied less than an hour.

McHenry, whom I met every day when I walked to the village, said that it was the Southern Cross and not the Pleiades that governed the dropping of the eggs, and that the *honu* did not approach the beach until the four stars forming the cross had reached a position exactly perpendicular to the horizon.

"Those turtles are better astronomers than Lyin' Bill," said McHenry. "They savvy the Southern Cross like Bill does a Doc Funk."

The turtle returned to her eggs on the ninth night, but if she saw evidences of enemies about, she left immediately, and waited another novendial period and, if again scared, came back on the twenty-seventh evening. But when that fatal night had passed she surrendered to the inevitable. Nohea knew the habits of the *honu* as well as she did herself. He knew the broad tracks she made, which she tried in vain to obliterate, and he often removed the eggs to eat raw, or freshly cooked. Nohea could swim to the beach where the mother turtle was, and land so quietly that she would not have notice of his coming, and so could not escape to the lagoon or the moat; or he could swim noiselessly to the reef, and forelay the uxorious male napping until the arrival of his consort from her oviposition. To rush upon either male or female and turn it over on its back was the act of a moment, if strength permitted, but Paumotuans seldom hunted alone for turtles, the fencing them from the water being better achieved by two or more. Even when we saw one at sea, Nohea would spring from the

canoe and fasten a hook about the neck and front flipper which rendered the *honu* as helpless as if a human were bound neck and leg. Once fast, the turtle was turned, and then pulled to the beach. Nohea could attach such a device to a turtle, and without a canoe swim with him to the beach or to a schooner. The turtle was put under a roof of cocoanut-leaves, until desire for his meat brought death to him.

Nohea often picked up *rori* to make soup. They were to me the most repulsive offering of the South Seas, long, round, thin echinoderms, shaped like cucumbers or giant slugs, and appalling in their hideousness. The Malays called them trepang, the Portuguese *bicho-do-mar,* or sea-slug, and the scientists holothurian. Slimy, disgusting, crawling beings, they were like sausage-skins or starved snakes six inches or six feet long, and stretchable to double that length. One end had a set of waving tentacles by which they drew in the sand and coral animalculæ. They crept along the bottom or swam slowly.

There was a small trade in these dried trepang, or *bêche de mer,* which were shipped to Tahiti and thence to San Francisco, for transshipment to China, for purchase by Chinese gourmets. The Chinese usually put them in their gelatinous soups. I had eaten them at feasts in Canton and Chifu. They were considered a powerful aphrodisiac, as swallows'-nests and ginseng.

No race so eagerly sought such love philters as the Chinese. They had a belief that certain parts and organs of animals strengthened the similar parts or organs in humans. Our own medical men often verged on the same theory, making elixirs, as the Chinese had for

countless centuries. At a Chinese feast where the heart of a tiger was the *pièce de résistance,* I had been assured that a slice of it would make me brave. There may have been something in it, for after eating I felt I was brave to have done so.

The fishing for *rori* was sometimes on a considerable scale. McHenry had often taken a score of Paumotuan men and women on his schooner to one of the unpopulated atolls. They built huts ashore for themselves, and others for curing the trepang. They searched for them with long grains or forks, going in calm weather to the outer edge of the reef where they found the red *rori,* which ranked second in the grading by the Chinese, but the black they had to dive for in the lagoon to great depths. Some trepang had spicules, or prickles, on their skin, and some were smooth, while others had teats or ambulacral feet, in rows; and these, known to the trade as teat-fish, and to the Chinese as *Se-ok-sum,* were *bonnes bouches* to a Pekinese gourmand. Next in order were the red, the black, and the lolly. These latter we found in great quantities on the reef at low tide in shallow places. They exuded, when stepped on, a horrid red liquid, like blood, from all the surface of their body.

Against mankind these *rori* had no defense when stabbed with the fork or grain, but to touch one of the elongated *Blutwursts* with any part of one's body was to rue one's temerity. They were like skins filled with a poisonous fluid, and this they ejected with force, so that if contacted with a scratch or sore, or one's eye, it set up immediate inflammation, and caused hours of agony. Many Paumotuans had thus suffered serious

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injury to their eyes. The leopard trepang, olive-green with orange spots, disgorged sticky threads when molested, and these clung fast to the human skin and raised painful blisters. Nature had armed them for protection. The native never gathered the *rori* in baskets or sacks, but made a box to drag about on land or float on the water, into which he put them.

The pawky Paumotuan gave no thought to the aphrodisiacal qualities of the *rori,* as did the Chinese. The filling of his belly or his purse was his sole idea. The trepang must be cooked as quickly as possible after removal from the water because it quickly dissolved, like a salted slug, into a jellied mass. If the native had no caldron in which to boil the *rori,* he threw them on red-hot stones, covered them with leaves, and left them to steam. In an hour they were shriveled and rid of their poisonous power. They were slit with a sharp knife and boiled for several hours in salt water until the outer skin was removed. Taken from the pot, they were placed on screens made of the spinal columns of the cocoanut-palm leaves, and underneath the screens was built a fire of cocoanut-husks. When thoroughly dried and smoked, the trepang was put in sacks, with great precaution against dampness. If not shipped at once they were from time to time dried in the sun, because the presence of any moisture prejudiced them to the palates of the Chinese epicures. In China they sold for a high price, having the place in their *cuisine* that rare caviar might have in ours.

Nohea and I essayed every kind of fishing afforded by the atoll. We often went out at midnight, according to the moon, and speared swordfish by the light of

torches, and I also caught these warriors of the sea on hook and line. We hooked sharks and many sorts of fish, and had many strange and stirring adventures.

For rousing hatred and fear, neither the devilfish, with his frightful tentacles and demoniacal body and eyes, nor the swordfish, which could hurl his hundred or thousand pounds against the body or craft of the fishermen, were peers of the *manta birostris,* the gigantic ray, called the "winged devil of the deep passes," which was seen only in the depths between the atolls, and which was never fished for because worthless to commerce or as food.

Nohea, Kopcke, and I were out one day in a cutter. This was a sailing craft of about ten tons, which was used to pick up copra at points away from villages and to bring it to the village or to the waiting schooner. It was about noon. We had hooked a dozen *bonito,* and were having luncheon when a sailor shouted to us to look at a sight near-by. We saw a number of the largest *mantas* any of us had ever seen. A dozen of these mammoth rays were swimming round and round, in circles not more than a hundred feet in diameter. They were about twenty-five feet across, and twenty feet from head to tip of tail, and each one raised a tip of an outer fin two feet or so above the water. The fin toward the center of the circle was correspondingly depressed, and they appeared like a flock of incredible bats. Every few minutes one threw itself into the air and turned completely over, displaying a dazzlingly white belly. Their long, whip-like tails were armed with dagger spines, double-edged with saw-teeth. Their mouths were

large enough to swallow a man, and their teeth, as they gleamed, flat as jagged stones.

Nohea said they used these fins to wave their prey, fish and crustaceans, into their maws. He expressed intense terror of them and urged Kopcke to steer away from them.

The *manta* had lifted the anchor of a vessel in harbor by pushing against the chain, and had towed the vessel a considerable distance. When harpooned, he had dragged as many as fourteen catamarans or boats without apparent weariness. Well might the Paumotuan in his frail fishing-canoe dread the sea-devil! He had known him rise beneath his pirogue, and with a blow of his fearful fins shatter fisherman and craft. Not vicious in pursuit of man as the shark, or lithe and able to impale his victims as the swordfish, yet more terrible when aroused by the impotent Paumotuan, the "winged devil of the deep passes" stood for all that was perilous and awesome among the beasts of the ocean. When harpooned from a schooner large enough not to be in danger from the *manta's* strength, the Paumotuan or Tahitian sailor loved to vent his hate upon the giant ray, and he had names for him then that he would not dare to call him from a smaller boat.

CHAPTER X

Traders and divers assembling for the diving—A story told by Llewellyn at night—The mystery of Easter Island—Strangest spot in the world—Curious statues and houses—Borrowed wives—Arrival of English girl—Tragedy of the Meke Meke festival.

THE scene at Takaroa was now remindful in a diminutive way of the bustle and turmoil before the opening of a camp-meeting in the United States. The traders and pearl-buyers of Tahiti began to assemble, and divers and their families of other islands to arrive. Soon the huddle had the mild disorder and excitement of an old-fashioned southern revival. Chinese, the cunning Cantonese, two generations in Tahiti, set up stands for selling sweetmeats and titbits, and the merchants spread out samples of their goods in competition with Mapuhi's and Hiram Mervin's stores. The whites developed artful schemes for circumventing one another in securing the best divers. These, until contracts were signed, were importuned and made much of as desirable members are solicited by college clubs. The narrow strand of the atoll crowded up with new-comers who every few days alighted from schooner, cutter, and canoe. All day the moat and sea were alive with boats unloading the belongings and merchandise of the visitors. The housing problem was settled by each family's or group's erecting for itself flimsy abodes of the scant building material growing on the isle, pieced out with boards or bits of flattened tin cans or canvas,

while others contented themselves with lean-tos or leafy kennels. All was good nature, anticipation of profits, and hope of miraculous drafts from the lagoon.

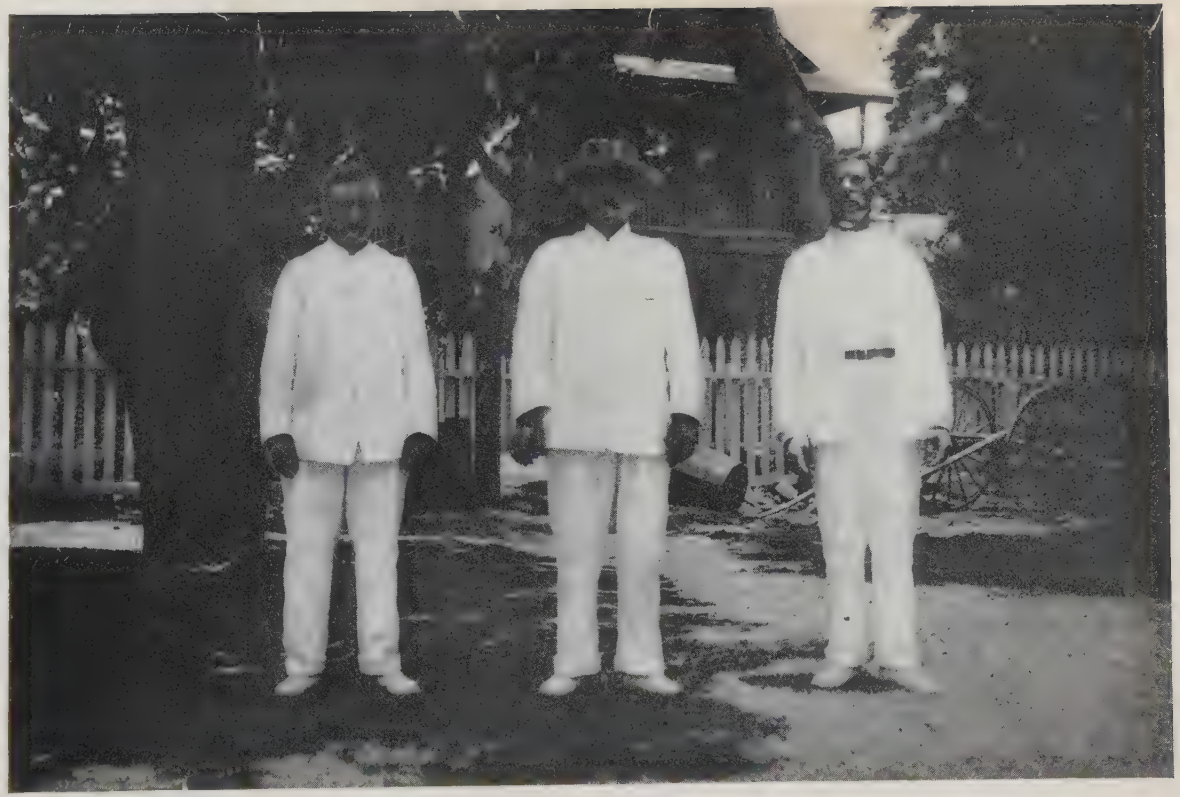
In the evenings on the verandas or about the bivouacs, there was an incessant chatter. The bargaining, the reuniting of former friends or acquaintances, the efforts of deacons and missionaries, the sly actions of the traders, the commencements of courtships, and love-making of the free-and-easy foreigners filled the balmy night air with laughter, whisperings, and conversation. A hundred stories were told—jokes, adventures, slanders, and curious happenings. Religion, business, mirth, and obscenity vied for interest.

Llewellyn, the Welsh Tahitian vanilla-planter, with Lying Bill, McHenry, Kopcke, Aaron Mandel, and others, formed a nightly circle. Sitting on boxes or reclining on mats under the cocoanut-trees, with a lantern or two above them and pipes aglow, these pilgrims of the deep recited moving tales of phenomena and accident, of wanderings and hardships, and small villainies.

"Sailors are damn fools," said Captain Nimau, whom I had met in Lacour's shed on Anaa. "There was a ship's boat passed here some time ago. It was from the wrecked American schooner *El Dorado,* and the three men in it with eight others of the crew had spent months on a lonely island and were beating up for Tahiti. They did not reach Papeete for days after I sighted them from Lacour's, yet they would n't spare the time to touch at Anaa where they might have gotten plenty of food and water, and rested a day or two. I

Photo from Dr. Theodore F. Cleveland

Spearing fish in the lagoon



The Captain and two sailors of the *El Dorado*

wondered who they were until O'Brien here told me. I saw them only through my glass."

"The skipper of the *El Dorado* who was in the boat would n't let it stop," said McHenry. "He was hurryin' to Tahiti to find a steamer for America to report to his owners an' to get a new billet. I saw him in Papeete, hustlin' his bleedin' boat and dunnage on the steamer for 'Frisco after three weeks' wait. The sailors were n't in no rush for they know 'd they be cheated outa their rights, anyway. The squarehead capt'in had the goods on the owners of the *El Dorado* because they could n't collect insurance for her without his say. He scooted away from Easter Island in that small boat after four months there, leavin' all but those two bloody fools who came with him."

"He mentioned to me that he was buying a house on the instalment plan, and would lose everything if he did n't get back to make his payment," I said. "So he ventured 3,600 miles in a small boat to save his home."

"Any one would have enough of that lonely island in four months," said Llewellyn, reminiscently. His deep, melancholy voice came from the shadows where he sat on a mat. "I lived years there. It is a place to go mad in. It is n't so much that it is the last bit of land between here and South America, and is bare and dry, without trees or streams, and filled with beetles that gnaw you in your sleep, but there 's something terrible about it. It has an air of mystery, of murder. I have never gotten over my life there. I wish I had never seen it, but I still dream about it."

Llewellyn was a university man. He had drunk as deeply of the lore of books and charts as he had of the products of the stills of Scotland and the wine-presses of France. In his library in Tahiti, his birthplace, were many rare brochures, manuscripts, and private maps of untracked parts of the Pacific, and keys to Polynesian mazes impenetrable by the uninstructed. Seventy years before, his father had come here, and Llewellyn as child and man had roamed wide in his vessels in search of secret places that might yield gold or power. He had worn bare the emotions of his heart, and frayed his nerves in the hunt for pleasure and excitement. Now in his fifties he felt himself cheated by fate of what he might have been intellectually.

"I suppose I 'm the only man here who has ever been on Rapa Nui," he went on. "It 's like Pitcairn, far off steam and sailing routes, and with no cargoes to sell or buy. Only a ship a year from Chile now, they say, or a boat from a shipwreck like the *El Dorado's*. But the scientific men will always go there. They think Easter, or Rapa Nui, as the natives call it now, has the solution of the riddle of the Pacific, of the lost continent. You know it had the only written language in the South Seas, a language the Easter Islanders, the first whites found there, knew apparently little of."

McHenry interrupted Llewellyn, to set in movement about the group a bottle of rum and a cocoanut-shell, first himself quaffing a gill of the scorching molasses liquor. Llewellyn downed his portion hastily, as if putting aside such an appetite while engaged on

an abstruse subject. He knew that rum made all equal; and he was an aristocrat, and now beyond the others in thought.

"Allez!" said Captain Nimau. "I am curious. *Dites!* What did you find out?"

Llewellyn's eyes smoldering in somber-thatched cells lit a moment as he returned to his enigmatic theme.

"I was a young man not long from a German university and travel in Europe when I was sent to Easter Island," he said, with dignity. "A commercial firm in Tahiti, a Frenchman and a Scotchman, had control of the island, which was not under the flag of any country, and was employed by them to look after their interests. The firm had a schooner that sailed there now and then, and with me went a young American. He was a graduate of some Yankee college, and had drifted into the South Seas a few months before. For some reason we did not know about, he was eager to go to Easter Island. He could speak none of the lingos hereabouts, and the firm at first refused him, but on his insistence, and willingness to agree to stay two years and to work for a trifle, they sent him with me.

"He was about twenty-four, handsome and gay, but a student. I liked him from the start. Ralph Waldo Willis was his name, and I was glad that I had such a companion for there was nobody else but natives to talk to, except Timi Linder, a half-Tahitian who was older than us and who was our boss. Our cockroach schooner was a month in getting there. It 's more than a thousand miles as the tropic bird goes, but for us it was sailing the wrong way many days, making half-circles or beating dead against the wind. We were

about ready to turn round and sail back when we caught a breeze and made sight of land. I hated it at first view. It was nothing like our South Sea islands, with black, frowning cliffs worn into a thousand caves and recesses. The ocean broke angrily against the stern basalt, or entered these huge pits and sprang out of them in welling masses of foam and spray. An iron-bound coast that defied the heart, or any sentiment but wonder and fear. Boulders as big as ships were half attached to the precipices or lay near-by to attest the continuous devouring of the land by the sea. Coming from Tahiti, with its beautiful reefs and beaches, and the clouds like wreaths of *reva-reva,* with cocoanut-palms and breadfruit-trees and bananas covering all the land, this Easter Island seemed terribly bare and forbidding. There was n't a flower on it."

Llewellyn halted and lit his pipe. In the glow of the match his eyes had the inversion of the relator who is remote from his audience.

McHenry, who had been quiet a few minutes, must call attention to himself.

"Is there any fightin' or women in this yarn?" he burst out, with a guffaw.

Llewellyn came back to the present in a dark fume.

"I 'll chuck it," he said irritably. "You want only stories that stink!"

Nimau, the Frenchman, took McHenry's arm.

"Nom d' une pipe!" he rapped out. "Take that bottle, McHenry, and throw it and yourself into the lagoon. Monsieur Llewellyn, please go on! The night is just begun. That *Ile de Pâcques* is a very curious place."

McHenry, offended, jumped up. "Go to hell, all

of you!" he blurted. "I 'll go and stir up the Mormons. If they smell my breath, it 'll make 'em jealous."

Llewellyn took up his narration.

"It 's a cursed place," he assented. "There 's been nothing but death since the white man found out there was anything to steal there. They were the healthiest people in the world, but we whites knew how to destroy them. Our schooner came into the roadstead of Hanga Roa at daybreak. I could see the huge, dead volcano, Rana Roraku, from the masthead. Other extinct volcanos were all over the rolling land. *Te Pito te Henua,* the old islanders called it; the Navel and the Womb. That monster crater, Rano Raraku, must have given it the latter name, for out of it came all those wonderful images of stone. The Navel was one of many rounded, shallower craters all about. When we landed at sunrise and the slanting rays shone on them they were for all the world like the navels of giants. I fancied each of them belonging to a colossus who had turned to stone. At first, the island was just a gray bulk, the surface in several sweeping curves dotted with molehills. As we climbed upon the cliffs and the details of the land grew in the sunlight, the impression was of a totally different part of the globe, of a cut-off place where scenes and people were of an ancient sort, of a mystery that stunned as thoughts crowded in on one. That impression never left me. I can feel it now after these years. The American, Willis, was fair overcome. He turned pale and put his hand to his stomach as if sick.

" 'What 's the matter?' I asked, though I really knew.

" 'I feel like when I was a little boy and saw the wax-works in New York,' he said. 'All the spirits of the dead and great seem to be around. But I 've waited years to come here.'

"As we walked from point to point that first day, the spectacle was incredible, absolutely bewildering. The whole island was a charnel-house and a relic shrine. It seemed to have been furnished by a race whose mind was fixed on death instead of life, and who worked for remembrance instead of happiness. Oblivion was their most desperate fear, or, at least, they must have thought that the preservation of their bones and the building of images of the dead were the chief duties of the living. At intervals all around the coast were immense platforms or High Places of slabs of stone, gigantic stages for tremendous statues. These bases were called *ahu,* and were some three or four hundred feet long, and on them at regular intervals had been mammoth sculptures. Scores of these lay half buried in the scrub, and some were covered over entirely by the growth of the grass. Some were fifty or even seventy feet high and others three or four feet, as if the makers sized them by the power or fame of the dead men they represented. They were like gray ghosts of the departed.

"I can't quite tell you the sensation we had at our first stroll about. Our house was at the base of the volcano, and Timi Linder, who came off to the schooner in a boat to meet us, took us to it. He was a cousin of mine—some of you remember him—and a fine fellow. He did n't make anything of all those images or the tombs. Sheep were his gods, and we had twenty thousand of them to take care of, besides hundreds of

horses and cattle. Our house, Willis's and mine, was at Mataveri, at the base of the crater Rana Kao, and Timi's was five miles away at Vaihu. It used to be a Catholic mission. We were soon settled down to a regular routine.

"We were on horseback all day. Some of the going was so bad it meant hours of barely walking the horses. The lower part of the island was all broken sheets of lava, grown over or about with tough grass, and it was worth your neck to travel fast in it. On the slopes of the hills it was smoother, the ash from the volcanos having been leveled more in the thousands of years since the last eruption. Another horrible thing about living there was that we had to get all our water like in these Paumotus by catching rain on our iron roof into tanks. God! How I used to long for a drink out of a Tahiti brook! When we were out in the scrub and noon came it was salvation to find a piece of shade. It was not so terribly hot, because Easter is out of the tropics, and, as I say, the climate is perfectly healthful, but the sun came down like lightning on that lava and the hard grass, and the glare and the heat combined, with the fatigue of the riding, would lay us out. The nights were cool, with heavy dews which supplied the sheep with enough moisture.

"Timi left us much to ourselves and said that he wanted us to go about without any duties and to learn the lay of the land. So we did that. The island was about thirty-four miles around, but it took us many weeks to make the circuit, because we followed the indentations of most of the inlets or bays, determined to see everything of the marvels before we got down to

work. Those were the days we suffered from thirst. Except for the lakes in the craters which I 'll tell you about, the so-called *puna* or springs were far apart, and then only shoal excavations among the boulders into which surface water ran and had been protected by rocky roofs from the sun and animals. Just a few bucketsful in each at a time, and rank it was. The queer thing was the natives drank but little water. They would be surprised every day at our thirst.

"We ascended the crater Rana Kao near our home. It was a quarter of a mile high, and nearly a mile across, a perfect, unbroken circle at its edge except where the lava had cut through and run down to the sea. The inside was magnificent, like a vast colosseum, and, at the bottom, a lake unlike any I had ever seen. Six hundred feet below the rim it was, and more than three hundred feet deep by our soundings, and the sides of the volcano were like a regular cone. We saw many cattle feeding or drinking in the midst of lush vegetation, and on getting close to the lake itself we found that they were standing or walking on a floating garden. So dense and profound was this matting or raft of green and brown, in which were bushes and even small trees, that the cattle moved on it without fear. Yet in places we saw the water rippled by the wind, and at times the cows or bulls drew back from their paths as if they sensed danger. The water was foul with vegetable and animal matter, but probably once this lake had been cared for, and its waters had quenched the thirst of many thousands of people."

"Ah!" said I, "Llewellyn, I was going to ask you. So far you have been on an uninhabited island. What

about the people you found there. I am more interested in them even than in the wonderful images and tombs."

" 'E won't say too bloody much about them," said Lying Bill, caustically. " 'Is family killed off most of 'em."

Again it seemed that we would hear Llewellyn to no conclusion. He got on his feet, and shook out his pipe.

"A gentleman has no place in the Paumotus," he said, bitterly. "Mr. O'Brien, you must not judge South Sea traders by McHenry or Pincher."

"Judge and be bloomin' well damned!" interrupted Lying Bill. "I 'll go an' see where McHenry is. Maybe the bottle 'll 'ave a drink in it, an' you can stay an' spin your yarn your own way. I know the bleedin' truth."

Captain Pincher retreated, muttering, in the darkness toward the sound of the surf on the reef. The gentle breeze agitated the cocoanuts above our heads, and Kopcke, a child in mentality though a man, begged Llewellyn to keep on.

"Pay no attention, please, to those bums!" said Kopcke in his politest French. "Now, me, I want to learn everything."

Nimau and I apologized for humanity, and insisted that the scholar proceed. Mollified, and with his pipe refilled, the quarter-caste graduate of Leipsic resumed his account.

"I was going to tell about the people, and I 'll begin at the beginning," he said, thoughtfully. "A Dutch ship discovered Easter Island two hundred years ago, and shot some of the natives. Every succeeding dis-

coverer did the same. Peruvian blackbirders killed hundreds and carried off five thousand of them to die in the guano deposits of the Chincha Islands and the mines of Peru. Almost every leading man, the king and every chief, was killed or captured. The prisoners nearly all died in slavery, and only Pakomeo came back. He lived near us, and told me all about it. Timi Martin believed there were twenty thousand people on the island near the time of the Peruvian raid.

"From then on, with all the livest men gone, the people paid no attention to any authority. There had been a hereditary monarchy for ages, and while the clans might go to battle for any reason, no one ever touched the king or his family. But with Maurata, the king, kidnapped, and most of the head men, there was no boss. Then *Frère* Eugène, a Belgian priest of Chile, brought back three youths who had been taken by the Peruvians. One was Tepito, the heir of King Maurata, and the priest thought maybe he could use him to convert the islanders. He had a hard time, but he did it. You must say for those old missionaries that they stuck to their jobs though hell popped. He had fifty narrow escapes from being assassinated by natives who thought him much like the Peruvians, and just when he was baptizing the last of the Rapa Nuiis, and complete peace had settled down, trouble began again. A Frenchman who was looking about for a fortune arrived there and took up his residence. He saw there was plenty of land not used for growing yams, the only crop, and so he went into partnership with a Scotchman in Tahiti to grow sheep, cattle, and horses. He gave a

few yards of calico for a mile of land, and started his ranch with thē Scotchman's animals.

"The Frenchman took up with a common woman who had been the wife of a chief but who was not of the chief caste, and he had her made queen. Queen Korato was her name, and she was a caution—like a society woman and a Jezebel, mixed. She bossed everything but her husband. She started a row between him and *Frère* Eugène, who claimed authority through the church. There being no regular government, the priest said that, through God and the pope, he was the ruler. He was a strong man, and I must say from all accounts kind to the natives. They started to work and built again, but the feud between the church and the queen became fiercer and fiercer, and finally after personal combats between leaders, and a few deaths, *Frère* Eugène gathered all his adherents and, securing a vessel through his bishop, transported them to the Gambier Islands.

"Now the struggle commenced of getting the land away from the natives. Without any government, and the land of each district owned in community by each clan, the queen and the Frenchman had to get title by cunning and force. They did not succeed in that without blood. Booze and guns and meat did it. The remaining head men gave away the land for sheep to eat, for gin and rum to drink, and for guns to shoot those who objected to having their land taken. Of course, it was really a community, with no private property inside the clans, but the chiefs signed papers they could n't read, and the firm claimed everything soon. It was legal as things go, as legal as England taking New Zealand or

Australia, or France taking my Tahiti. The people divided into factions, headed by self-appointed chiefs, and went to fighting. Some were driven into craters, and some hid in caves. The crowd that had the upper hand chased the other groups. They all began to steal the sheep for food, and the Frenchman hired a band to stop the marauding and end the war. Then the real massacres began. Natives were so pressed they took up cannibalism again, and without fire they ate their meat raw. Ure Vaeiko told me how he warmed a slice of a man's body in his armpit to make it better eating.

"In the end a kind of peace was made by the terrible misery of all. But the Frenchman who had gotten the land did not live long to enjoy his bargain. They caught him unawares when he was on a ladder helping to repair the very house we lived in, and which he built. They struck him down with a club, and buried him near-by. Other whites all but lost their lives later when they tried to prevent the islanders from stealing sheep when hungry. They were besieged in our house, but finally were saved by the arrival of a vessel. Now, with their potato plantations destroyed, their houses burned, the natives were done for. They consented to sign contracts to work in the hot sugar-fields of Tahiti. Five hundred were removed there. I often saw them, poor devils. They were homesick to death, and they never were brought back as promised. They died in Tahiti, crying for their own land.

"It was not long after that I went to Easter with the American, Willis. Queen Korato had followed the Frenchman into the grave, and the Scotchman had become the sole owner of the island. No one disputed

him, and when Willis and I took up our residence in the former royal residence at Mataveri, Timi Linder was the virtual king. The entire population either lived on small plantations which they had to wall in to keep the cattle and sheep from eating their yams, or they worked for us looking after the cattle and horses, and shearing the sheep. The fighting was over, for the spirit of the wild islanders was extinct as was almost all the twenty thousand Linder said were there a few years before. The two or three hundred left lived in the ruins of the ancient stone houses, cairns, and platforms, the tombs of the dead Rapa Nuiis for ages. The living piled up more stones or roofed in the walls with slabs and earth, and got along somehow. They had lost all reverence for the past, and often brought us the skulls of their ancestors to trade for a biscuit or two or a drink of rum.

"Willis and I were young, and though both of us were intensely interested in the mystery of the island, and the unknown throngs who had built the gigantic sepulchers and carved the monoliths, we had many dull hours. When it rained or at night we thought of the outside world. The howling of the sheep-dogs, the moaning of the wind, and the frightful pests of insects made the evenings damnable. The fleas were by the millions, and the glistening brown cockroaches, two or three inches long, flew at our lights and into our food, while mosquitoes and hordes of flies preyed on us. We often sat with nets on our heads and denim gloves on, and on our cots we stuffed our ears with paper to keep out snapping beetles. Willis was wrapped up in trying to read the wooden tablets Linder had collected, on which were

rows and rows of picture symbols. First, he had to learn the Rapa Nui language. There 's one way to do that in these islands. We all know that, and it was easy there. They had always had a custom by which a husband leased his wife to another man for a consideration. Linder attended to that, and sent over to us two girls to teach us the lingo. They were beautiful and merry, being young, and looked after our household. Taaroa was assigned to Willis and Tokouo to me. We got along famously until one day, after a year or so, a schooner arrived to take away wool, and on it was a white girl and her father. That changed everything for us."

In Llewellyn's air and low, mournful voice there was confession. In his words there had been anger at Captain Pincher's accusation, but with Lying Bill and McHenry, mockers at all decency, missing from the circle, we others became impressed, I might say, almost oppressed, by impending humiliation. In an assemblage, a public meeting, or a pentecostal gathering, one withstands the self reproach and contrition of others, or, perhaps, experiences keen pleasure in announced guilt and remorse, but among a few, it hurts. One's soul shrinks at its own secrets, and there is not the support and excitement of the throng. We moved uneasily, with a struggling urge to call it a night, but Llewellyn, absorbed in his progress toward unveilment, went on without noticing our disquiet.

"My God! What a change for Willis and me! The schooner was in the offing one morning when we got up. We calculated that the wind would not let her anchor at Hanga Piko, and started out on horses for Rana Raraku to photograph the largest image we had found

on the island. You have been in Egypt, O'Brien?"

I nodded assent, and the lamp threw a spot of light on Llewellyn's gloomy face.

"You remember the biggest obelisk in the world is still unfinished in the quarry at Syene. This one, too, was still in the rough. It lay in an excavation on the slope of the huge crater, not fully cut out of the rocky bank, but incredibly big. We measured it as quite seventy feet long. It was as all those images, a half-length figure, the long, delicate hands almost meeting about the body, the belly indrawn—pinched, and the face with no likeness to the Rapa Nui face, or to any of the Polynesians, but harsh and archaic, perhaps showing an Inca or other austere race, and also the wretchedness of their existence. Life must have been dour for them by their looks and by their working only for the dead. How they ever expected to move this mass we could not understand. They had no wood, even, to make rollers, as the Egyptians had, because their thickest tree was the *toromiro,* not three inches in diameter, but they had to depend on slipping the monstrous stones down slopes and dragging them up hills or on the level by ropes of native hemp and main strength. Hundreds or thousands of sculptors and pullers must have been required for the 555 monoliths we found carved or almost finished. But they never were of the race the whites saw there.

"Before we began the descent of Rana Rauraku we stopped a moment to survey the scene. The sun was setting over La Perouse Bay, and the side of the crater on which we were was deepening in shadow. As we went down the hill the many images reared themselves

as black figures of terror and awe against the scarlet light. Willis was in a trance. He was a queer fellow, and there was something inexplicable in his attachment to those paradoxes of rock dolls. He thought he had discovered some clue to the race of men or religious cult which he believed once went almost all over the world and built monuments or stonehenges long before metal was known as a tool. We rode across the swelling plain past the quarry in the Teraai Hills where the hats for the images were carved of the red sandstone, and we stayed a minute to see again a monster twelve feet across and weighing many tons. It was a proper head-covering for the sculpture in the quarry. What had caused the work to stop all of a sudden? There were hundreds of tools, stone adzes and hammers, dropped at a moment, statues near finished or hardly begun, some half-way to the evident place of fixation, and others almost at them. What dreadful bell had sounded to halt it all?

"Talking about all that, we came to where we could see the Hanga Piko landing, and our company schooner anchored a little offshore. The captain and some of the crew were engaged in bringing supplies ashore, and it was not until we rode into the ground of Queen Korato's palace, our home, that we saw there were white strangers arrived. Imagine the situation! When we called to Taaroa and Tokouo to get a man to care for the horses, out came a beautiful English girl in a white frock, and apologized for having entered the house in our absence. Her father joined her, and we soon knew him, Professor Scotten Dorey, for the greatest authority on Polynesian languages, myths, and migrations. There he was, by

Photo by International Newsreel

Beach dancers at Tahiti

After the bath in the pool

the favor of the Tahiti owners, come to stay indefinitely and to study the Rapa Nui language. His daughter was his scribe, she said, and saved his eyes as much as possible by copying his notes. We were up against it, as O'Brien would say. Our conveniences were scant,—the queen had not been much for linen or dishes,—and you know how we fellows live even in such nearer places like Takaroa.

"Then there was the matter of Taaroa and Tokouo; borrowed wives, recognized as the custom was. Willis took one look at Miss Dorey, and went white as when he first saw the sweep of Easter Island. He was as sensitive as a child about certain things. There we had been all alone, I used to doing what I damn please, anyhow, and he without any old *bavarde* to chatter, or even to see. I won't say, too, that we had n't had some drinking bouts, nights when we had scared away even the cockroaches and the ear-boring beetles with our songs, and the love dances of Taaroa and Tokouo. For me, I 'm a gentleman, and I was a student under Nietzsche at Basel, but I hate being interfered with. I 've lived too long in the South Seas. But for the American, a young chap just out of college, it was like being seen in some rottenness by a member of his family. You fellows may laugh, but that 's the way he felt. He used to talk about a younger sister to me on our voyage up.

"We assured the daughter and father we would care for them. There was room enough, four or five chambers in the place, and we could improvise beds for them, rough as they might be, but the daily living, the meals and the evenings, confronted us hatefully. I would mind nothing but the being so close to probably very

particular people, the lack of freedom of undress, and the pretense about Tokouo, but Willis was in a funk. He wanted to go to live with Timi Linder, but I knew that he could not endure that. Linder was island-born and almost a native, insects were nothing to him, and he made no pretense of regular meals like a white. Besides he was boss, and wanted to live his own life. I told Willis plainly he had to make the best of it for a few months. He finally said he would break off his intimacy with Taaroa, and I said that that was his lookout.

"So we took the Doreys into our *ménage*. We gave them two rooms together, and Willis and I doubled up. Taaroa and Tokouo had their mats in the fourth, and the fifth was the living- and dining-room. The cookhouse was detached. We improvised a big table for the professor on which he could spread his dictionaries and comparative lists of South Seas languages, and there day after day he delved into the *Te Pito te Henua* mystery. Chief Ure Vaeiko and Pakomeo were interpreters of the tablets and reciters of legends, but, as the professor had not yet mastered the Rapa Nui tongue, a go-between in English was needed. For a few days Timi Linder volunteered for this job, but soon it was the American who was called upon. He had made good use of his year or so and knew the dialect well. It is only a dialect of the Malayo-Polynesian language, and the professor himself in three months knew more of it than any of us because he spoke six or seven other branches of it from New Zealand Maori to Tahitian.

"The schooner, after a month of unloading supplies and taking on wool and cattle, sailed for Tahiti, and Timi Linder went with her, as he had been three years

away from his relations. This left me in charge, and as the principal settlement was at Vaihu, the former mission, I was ordered by Linder to move there, and Willis to stay at Hanga Piko. You can see easily how fate was shaping things for the American. I took Tokouo with me, and, the year's lease of Taaroa expiring, she was demanded back by her husband. An elderly Tahitian couple replaced them as helpers in the palace. As I was five miles away, with a poor road, and had to keep the accounts of births and deaths of people and animals, look after the warehouse, and be a kind of chief and doctor, I saw less and less of the Doreys, and not much more of Willis. He had to run his gang, attend to the cattle, the water-holes, and sheep that got in distress in the craters or caves. Of course, now and then he came over to see me, or I to see him and the English people,—I 'm Welsh myself, three-quarters,—and I met him often in the scrub.

"Everything seemed going along all right after a few months. The Doreys came in the seventh month of the Rapa Nui year, *Koro,* which corresponds to our January, Timi Linder left in *Tuaharo,* February, and Taaroa returned to her husband the last of that month. The month is divided in half, beginning with the new moon and the full moon. On the first of the full moon in *Vaitu-nui,* May, we had a party to visit the *ahu* of Hananakou. The professor, his daughter, and Willis joined me at Vaihu as it was on the trail, and in company with several islanders we started. It so happened that Taaroa was at my house to visit Tokouo, and when Willis rode into the inclosure she was the first person he saw.

"'*Kohomai!*' he said, which is the usual greeting. It is like 'Good day' or 'How do you do,' but it actually means 'Come to me!' You answer, '*Koe!*' which is 'Thou!' A dozen times a day you might meet and say this, pleasantly or automatically, but I heard Taaroa reply with astonishing bitterness, '*Koe kovau aita paihenga!*' 'Thou! I am not a dog!' She turned her back on him as Miss Dorey followed in, and I saw on his face a look of puzzlement and fear. I was struck for the first time by the contrasting beauty of the two girls, Taaroa the finest type of Polynesian, as fine as the best Marquesan, and the white girl the real *tea-tea,* the blond English, the pink-white flesh, the violet eyes and rich brown hair. I tell you I 'd like to have been lover to them both. Taaroa looked intently at Miss Dorey, who spoke to her negligently though kindly, and the incident was over. Anyhow, for the time being.

"The *ahu* of Hananakou was a grim sight in the moonlight. About eighty yards long, and but four wide, it loomed on the sea-cliff like the fort at Gibraltar, black, broken, and remindful of the past. The front was of huge blocks of fire-rocks, all squared as neatly as the pyramids, and carved in curious faces and figures barely traceable in the brilliant night. Among these was the swastika or fylfot. Human remains filled the inner chambers, and bones were lying loose among the boulders. The professor took my arm—he was in his sixties then—and led me to where a fallen statue lay prone on the steep slope toward the sea.

"'Agassiz guessed it,' he said quietly. 'The Pacific continent once extended due west from South America to here, pretty nearly from the Galapagos to the Pau-

motus. The people who built these statues were the same as the Incas of Peru. In my room now is a drawing made by my daughter of the figures on the rocks at Orongo. I have its duplicate on a piece of pottery I dug up in an Inca grave. There is the swastika as in ancient Troy, India, and in Peru. The Maori legend known from Samoa to New Zealand was correct. Probably it came from Rapa Nui people who survived the cataclysm that lowered the continent under the ocean.

"Instinctively I turned my head towards the great land of South America now two thousand miles away, and in the moonbeams I saw Willis clasping the English girl's hand. Her face was close to his and her eyes had happy tears in them. A jealous feeling came over me. As a matter of fact, I never made love to a white woman since I left Europe. I 'm satisfied with the part-native who don't ask too much time or money. But, by God, I envied him that night, and when we returned to Queen Korato's palace I hated him for his luck.

The mood of Llewellyn was growing more self-accusatory, and his voice less audible. Perhaps Aaron Mandel, an old pearl-buyer, had heard him tell the story before, because he interrupted him, and said:

"What the devil 's the good of openin' old graves, T'yonni?"

He said it, indulgently, calling him by his familiar Tahitian name, but Llewellyn was set to tell it all. I felt again and more certainly that it was confession, and excused my impatient interest by the need of his making it.

"Let him finish!"

Llewellyn's gaze was that of a man relieved from imminent prison.

"It 's not my grave, Mandel," he said; "I could not foresee the future. When I got back to Vaihu, Tokouo brought me some rum and water, and Taaroa sat on the mat with us. She had questions in her black eyes, and I had to answer something after what I had heard her say to Willis.

" 'We went to Hananakou,' I began.

" 'He does not need me now,' she broke in angrily. 'He has gotten all my words, and gives them to the *Via tea-tea* (white woman). He is a *toke-toke,* a thief!'

"Remember that Miss Dorey was undoubtedly the first white female Taaroa had ever seen, and that jealousy among women or men in Rapa Nui was unknown. They hated, like us, but jealousy they had no word for. And because I was amazed at her emotion, I said:

" 'I saw them *hohoi* (embrace).'

"Taaroa showed then the heat of this new flame on Easter Island. She gave a mocking laugh, repeated it, then choked, and burst into wailing. You could have told me that moment I knew nothing of the Maori, and I would not have denied it. I was struck dumb, and swallowed my drink. And as I poured another, and sat there in the old mission-house where *Frère* Eugène had gathered his flock years before, Taaroa began the love song of her race, written in the picture symbols on the wooden tablet I have in my house in Tahiti now. It is the *Ate-a-renga-hokan iti poheraa.* You know how it goes. I can hear Taaroa now:

"Ka tagi, Renga-a-manu—hakaopa;
Ohiu runarme a ita metua.
Ka ketu te nairo hihi—O te hoa!
Eaha ton tiena—e te hoa—e!

"Ta hi tiena ita have.
Horoa ita have.
Horoa moni e fahiti;
Ita ori miro;
Ana piri atu;
Ana piri atu;
Ana tagu atu."

Even a quarter of Maori blood with childhood spent in Polynesia lends a plaintive quality to the voice of men and women, and gives them an ability to sing their own songs in a powerfully affecting manner—the outpouring of the sad, confused hearts of a destroyed people. Under the cocoanut-trees of Takaroa, the lamps all but expiring by then, the man who had sat under Nietzsche at Basel rendered the song of Takaroa, the primitive love cry of the Rapa Nuiis, so that I was transported to the Land of Womb and Navel, and saw as he did the lovely savage Taaroa in her wretchedness.

"Auwe!" Kopcke exclaimed. "She could love!"

"Eiaha e ru! You shall see!" murmured Llewellyn, forebodingly. "After that I did n't meet Taaroa for two months. She stopped visiting Tokouo, and my girl said she was *heva,* which is wrong in the head. Tokouo could n't even understand jealousy. But I did, and I envied the American having two women, the finest on the island, in love with him. About a month later I was

at the palace to have supper with them. My word, Miss Dorey had straightened out things. There were the best mats, those the natives make of bulrushes, everywhere. The table was spread as fine as wax, and we had a leg of mutton, tomatoes, and other fresh vegetables. She said they owed the green things to Willis, who had hunted the islands for them, and found some wild and some cultivated by natives who had the seed from war-vessels that had come years before. The professor had out my tablets after dinner, and his daughter read the translation into English of the song Taaroa had sung. She had brought with her on the schooner a tiny organ about as big as a trunk, and she had set the *ute* to music, as wild as the wind. The words went like this:

"Who is sorrowing? It is Renga-a-manu-hakopa!
A red branch descended from her father.
Open thine eyelids, my true love.
Where is your brother, my love?
At the Feast in the Bay of Salutation
We will meet under the feathers of your clan.
She has long been yearning after you.
Send your brother as a mediator of love between us,
Your brother who is now at the house of my father.
Oh, where is the messenger of love between us?
When the feast of driftwood is commemorated
There we will meet in loving embrace.

"She was dressed all in white, with a blue sash, and a blue ribbon in her hair, and when she sang I could see her white bosom as it rose and fell. She was making love to the American right before me. Her father, with the tablet beside him, thought of nothing but the trans-

lation, and she had forgotten me. I could see that this was one of many such evenings. Willis stood and turned the leaves on which she had written her words and air, and when she sang the word 'love' their bodies seemed to draw each other. There was a girl I knew in Munich—but hell! After the tablets were put away, we talked about the yearly festival of the god Meke Meke, which was about the last of the ancient days still celebrated. The schooner was due back, and would take away the visitors, and they hoped that it would not go before thirty days yet, when it would be *Maro,* the last month in the Rapa Nui year, our July. That was the real winter month, and then the sea-birds came by the tens of thousands to lay their eggs. Mostly they preferred the ledges and hollows of the cliffs, but the first comers frequented two islets or points of rock in the sea just below the crater Rano Kao. Both Chief Ure Vaeiko and the old Pakomeo said that always there had been a ceremony to the god Meke Meke at that time. We had witnessed the one the previous year, and could tell the English pair about it.

"All the strong men of the island, young and old, met at Orongo after the birds were seen to have returned, and raced by land and water to the rocks, Motu Iti and Motu Nui, to seize an egg. The one who came back to the king and crowd at Orongo was highly honored. The great spirit of the sea, Meke Meke, was supposed to have picked him out for regard, and all the year he was well fed and looked after by those who wanted the favor of the god. The women especially were drawn to him as a hero, and a likely father of strong children. In times gone, said Ure Vaeiko, many were

killed or hurt in the scramble of thousands, and in the fights for precedence that came in the struggle to break the eggs of competitors. Now one or two might be drowned or injured, but, with the few left to take part, often no harm was done anybody.

"When I left that night Willis walked a little distance with me as I led my horse. He was under stress and, after fencing about a bit, said that he would like to go away on the schooner. His two years were not complete, but he was anxious to get back to America. He had gathered material for a thesis on the tablets and sculptures of Rapa Nui, with which he believed he could win his doctor's degree. That was really what he had come for, he said. I was sore because I knew the truth. I did n't doubt about the thesis. That explained his being there at all, but his wanting to go on that next vessel was too plain. I said to him that he was not a prisoner or a slave, but that I hoped he would stay, unless Timi Linder was aboard, when it would be all right, as only two white men were needed, one at each station. We left it that way, though he did not say yes or no.

"Well, Linder was on the schooner, and she came into Hanga Piko Cove two weeks before the Meke Meke feast, so that her sailing was set for the day after, and Willis was told by Linder it was all right for him to go. Linder had letters for everybody, and new photographic films for Willis. I unloaded the vessel, and Willis rode over the island with Linder to show him the changes, the increase of cattle and sheep, and pick out certain cattle and horses the schooner was to carry to Tahiti. He made dozens of pictures for his thesis. Meanwhile the natives had absolutely quit all work and

moved in a body from their little plantations to the old settlement at Orongo to prepare for the race. Orongo was the queerest place in the world. If Rapa Nui was strange, then Orongo was the innermost secret of it. It was a village of stone houses in two rough rows, built on the edge of the volcano Rana Kao, and facing the sea. There were fifty houses, all pretty much alike. They were built against the terraces and rocks of the crater slope, without design, but according to the ground. The doorways to the houses were not two feet wide or high, and the rooms, though from a dozen to forty feet long, never more than five feet wide, and the roofs not more than that high. They were built of slabs of stone, and the floors were the bare earth. The door-posts were sculptured and the inside walls painted, and the rocks all about marked with hieroglyphics and figures. There were lizards, fishes, and turtles, and a half-human, mythical beast with claws for legs and arms, but mostly the Meke Meke, the god which Professor Dorey had discovered the likeness of in the Inca tombs in Peru. The old people said that Orongo had never been occupied except at the time of the feast of Meke Meke.

"So there they were, all that were left of the once many thousands, living again in those damp, squat tombs, and cooking in the ovens by the doorways that were there before Judas hanged himself. All knew that Orongo was more ancient than the platforms or the images, and those were built by the same folk who put up the stonehenges in Britain and in the Tonga Islands. Pakomeo, who had escaped from the slavery in Peru, was in charge of the Meke Meke event, be-

cause Chief Ure Vaeiko was in his eighties. We donated a number of sheep, and, with yams, bananas, and sugar-cane,—we grew a little of these last two,—the show was mostly of food. A few went to Orongo several days before the bird-eggs trial, but all slept there the night before. The moon was at its biggest, and the women danced on the terrace in front of the houses. Professor Dorey and his daughter with Willis were there when Timi Linder and I arrived after supper. They had waited for us, to begin, and the drums were sounding as we rounded the curve of the crater.

"The English girl was entranced by the beauty of the night, the weird outlines of the Orongo camp, the overreaching rise of the volcano, the sea in the foreground, and the *kokore toru,* the moon that shone so brightly on that lone speck of land thousands of miles from our homes. I heard her singing intimately to him an old English air. The schooner was to leave the next day, and her lover would go with her.

"When we were seated on mats, Pakomeo struck his hands together, and called out, *'Riva-riva maitai!'* Two women danced, both so covered with mat garments and wearing feather hats drooping over their heads that I did not know them. The tom-tom players chanted about the Meke Meke, and the women moved about the circle, spreading and closing their mats in imitation perhaps of the Meke Meke's actions in the sea or air. I was bored after a few minutes, and watched Willis and Miss Dorey. They were in the shadow sitting close to each other, their hands clasped, and from his sweet words to her I learned her first name. The father

always said simply 'daughter,' but Willis called her Viola. It was a good name for her, it seemed to me, for she was grave and pathetic like the viola's notes. The two women were succeeded by others, who put in pantomine the past of their people, the building of the *ahu* and the images, the fishing and the wars, the heroic feats of the dead, and the vengeance of the gods. Christianity had not touched them much. They still believed in the *atua,* their name for both god and devil.

"Now the heaps of small fuel brought days before by severe labor were lit, and when the fires were blazing low a single dancer appeared. She had on a white tapa cloak, flowing and graceful, and in her hair the plumage of the *makohe,* the tropic bird, the long scarlet feathers so prized by natives. As she came into the light I saw that she was Taaroa. Her long black hair was in two plaits, and the *makohe* feathers were like a coronet. She had a dancing wand in each hand, the *ao,* light and with flattened ends carved with the heads of famous female dancers of long ago. The three drums began a slow, monotonous thump, and Taaroa a gentle, swaying movement, with timid gestures, and coquettish glances—the wooing of a maiden yet unskilled in love. The drums beat faster, and the simulated passion of the dancer became more ardent. Her eyes, dark-brown, brilliant, and liquid, commenced to search for the wooed one, and roved around the circle. They remained fixed an instant on the American in startling appeal. I glanced and saw Miss Dorey look at him surprisedly and inquiringly, and then resentfully at Taaroa. But she was carrying on her pantomine, and

she ended it with a burst of passion, the *hula* that we all know, though even more attractive than Miri's or Mamoe's in Tahiti.

"I suppose Miss Dorey had never in her life seen such an expression of *amour,* and did n't know that women told such things. Her face was like the fire, and she moved slightly away from Willis. But now Taaroa was dancing again, and altogether differently. She stood in one spot, and as the drums beat softly, raised her arms as if imploring the moon, and sang the mourning *ute* of Easter Island:

" 'Ka ihi uiga—te ki ati,—
Auwe te poki, e—'

"The sail of my daughter,
Never before broken by the force of foreign clans!
Ever victorious in all her fights,
She would not drink the poison waters in the
cup of obsidian glass.

"We all felt depressingly the sudden reversal of sentiment, and, when Taaroa had finished, Miss Dorey said she would like to leave. She shivered. The air was a little cold, but the Rapa Nuiis built up their fires and prepared to dance through the night. We whites, with Timi Linder, went home with a promise to meet at noon to-morrow for the egg ceremony. As Timi and I rode to Vaihu, seven or eight miles it was, he remarked that Taaroa had gotten much handsomer while he was away. He asked if she was still friendly with Willis, and I explained things. Timi did n't make much of those troubles, but 'Anyhow,' he said, 'they 'll all sail

away to-morrow, and her husband can lease her to me.' "

Llewellyn hesitated. His story had been long. The lamps were out.

"There is n't much more," he said, apologetically though pleadingly. "When the race started at Orongo, we four, the English people, Willis, and I, went to the sea where we could watch the swimming. Timi Linder stayed with Ure Vaeiko and Pakomeo to award the prize. The runners came swarming down the cliff, some taking paths around and others trying to climb straight down. They wore loin-cloths only, and were mad as fighters with the excitement. Some fell but got up, and away they went, and some leaped into the sea from the bluff at forty or fifty feet high. The rocks were about a hundred fathom off shore, and that is a short swim for Kanakas. But it was the carrying the egg whole and getting up the bluff again that tested skill and luck. Well, it was over in a little while, and when we returned to Orongo, Matatoa, the husband of Taaroa, had been made the choice of the god Meke Meke for the year.

"As the passengers had their goods already stowed, but intended to go aboard the schooner before nightfall to wait for a favoring wind, Willis proposed that we all go back to the beach and have a last bath together. Most of the Rapa Nuiis went with us, and the victor and Taaroa among them. We all wore *pareus* and I tell you those two young people made a magnificent pair. That year and a half on Rapa Nui had done wonders for Willis. He was like a wrestler, and Miss Dorey in her *pareu* was a picture.

"Some one spoke of the spring under the sea, and

proposed that we all drink from it. It was like that one at Nâgone. The fresh water runs into the ocean about ten feet under the ocean at the bottom of the cliff. Willis shouted out that he had never had a drink under the sea, and would try it first. Nobody, they said, had been down there for years, but in war time it had been a prized spot. Willis was a good diver, and down he went while we watched from the rocks twenty feet above on which we climbed. Now, to stay down there long enough to drink, some one else had to stand on your shoulders, and some one else on theirs. Willis plunged in, and, of those sporting in the water, Taaroa was first to follow him down. Her husband, the winner, was the second, and we, laughing and joking about the American's heavy burden, waited for him to come up spluttering.

"You know how long it seems. We had no watches, but after about a minute, Matatoa suddenly tottered and then dived. The water was not very clear there because of the issuance of the spring, and mud stirred up, and we could not see beneath the surface. But we knew something unexpected had happened, and Miss Dorey seized my arm.

" 'For God's sake, go down and help him,' she shrieked.

"I hesitated. I did n't think anything was wrong, but even then I had a feeling of not risking anything to save him if it was. He had too much already. Rotten! I know it. But that 's my nature. I could n't have done any good. Matatoa came up and went down again and then a half dozen dived to the place where Willis and Taaroa were out of sight. One came up and yelled

Old cocoanut trees

From the painting by Oscar F. Schmidt

The dark valley of Taaoa

that he could not find them, and then we knew the worst. They were gone by this time more than three minutes. Then I leaped in, too, but there were so many of us we got tangled up with one another under the water, and as Matatoa came near me I told every one else to move aside, and that we two would make the search.

"Well, we found that at the spring a frightful sponge of seaweed and kelp had grown, and that Willis and Taaroa had become fastened in it. We had to take down knives to cut them out, and we brought them up together. She had him clasped in her arms so tightly we had to tear them apart. They were like dead. His heart was not beating, but we carried them up the rocky path and with as much speed as possible to the fires which the natives still had for cooking. There Pakomeo and Ure Vaeiko directed the holding of them in the smoke which, as you know, does sometimes bring them back, but they were dead as Queen Korato. We put the body of the American on a horse and took it to the palace. Taaroa remained at Orongo, and her tribe began at once preparations to bury her in one of the burrows. Miss Dorey was quiet. Except that one shriek I did not hear her cry. I went to Vaihu that night and left Timi Linder with them. I got drunk, and Timi said in the morning that the English girl stayed alone all night with Willis in the living room."

I had sat so long listening to Llewellyn that when, with the tension off, I tried to stand up, I reeled. He sat with his head bowed. Captain Nimau grasped my arm to help himself up, and said, *"Mais, mon Dieu!* that was terrible. You buried the American there, and the Doreys left soon."

"The next day, after the burial. I remained two years more, and, by the great Atua of Rano Roraku, I was n't sober a week at a time."

Kopcke lit a cigarette, and, as we prepared to separate, said sententiously: *"Mon vieux,* I know women and I know the Kanaka, and I do not think Taaroa drowned the American for love. She did n't know about the sea-grass being there."

Llewellyn did not answer. He only said, vexedly, "Well, for heaven's sake, let 's get a few drinks before we go to sleep!"

I left them to go to Nohea's shack. On my mat I pitied Llewellyn. He had a real or fancied contrition for his small part in the tragedy of Rapa Nui. But my last thought was of the violet eyes of Miss Dorey. Those months to England must have been over-long.

CHAPTER XI

Pearl hunting in the lagoon—Previous methods wasteful—Mapuhi shows me the wonders of the lagoon—Marvelous stories of sharks—Woman who lost her arm—Shark of Samoa—Deacon who rode a shark a half hour—Eels are terrible menace.

THE lagoon of Takaroa was to be the scene of intense activity and of incredible romance for the period of the open season for hunting the pearl-oyster. Eighty years or more of this fishing had been a profitable industry in Takaroa, especially for the whites who owned or commanded the vessels trading here. A handful of nails would at one time buy the services of a Paumotuan diver for a day. Trifles, cheap muskets, axes, and hammers, were exchanged for shells and pearls, often five dollars for five hundred dollars' worth. The Paumotuan was robbed unconscionably by cheating him of his rights under contracts, by intimidation, assault, and murder, by getting him drunk, and the usual villainous methods of unregulated trade all over the world. The Sons of Belial were hereabouts. They had to haul down the black flag under compulsion, but they sighed for the good old days, and did not constitute themselves honest guardians for the natives even now.

The piratical traders of the early decades sailed from atoll to atoll, bartering for pearls and shells, or engaging the Paumotuans to dive for them, either by the month or season, at a wage or for a division of

the gains. For their part, the traders supplied firearms, salt meat, and biscuit or flour, though rum or other alcoholic drink was their principal merchandise. The average native would continue to sell his soul for the godlike exaltation of the hours of drunkenness, and forget the hell of the aftermath. He did sell his body, for often the diver found himself in debt to the traders at the end of the year. If so, he was lost, for he remained the virtual slave of the creditor, who gave him still enough rum to make him quiescent, and to continue in debt till he died from the accidents of his vocation, or from excesses.

The lagoons were emptied of their shells in improvident manner, shells of any size being taken, and no provision made for the future nor for the growth and propagation of the oysters. The industry was the usual fiercely competitive struggle that marks a new way of becoming rich quickly. The disorder and wasteful methods of the early days of gold digging in California, and later in Alaska, matched the reckless roguery and foolish mishandling of these rich pearl-fisheries before the French Government tardily ended the reign of lawlessness and prodigality. Gambling became a fever, and the white man knew the cards better than the brown. Driven by desire for rum and for more money to hazard, the Paumotuan risked terrible depths and killed himself, or ruined his health by too many descents in a day. Atoll and sea must soon have been deprived of people and oysters.

Thirty years ago, the secretary of the *Collège de France,* summoned to Tahiti to find a remedy, reported that, if laws were not made and enforced against the

conditions he found, the industry would speedily pass. Schooners of many nationalities frequented the atolls. Pearls were not rare, and magnificent shells were found in many of the eighty lagoons. Their size surpassed all found now. The continuous search had impoverished the beds, which were the result of centuries, and had robbed them of shells of age and more perfect growth, as war took the strongest and bravest men of a nation, and left the race to be perpetuated by cowards, weaklings, and the rich or politic who evaded the front of battle.

It took five years to grow a fine shell. The sixth year often doubled the value in mother-of-pearl, and the seventh year doubled it again. The Chinese, in a certain famous fishery off their coast, sought the shells only every ten or fifteen years; but those yellow people had the last word in conservation of soil and every other source of gain, forced to a sublimated philosophy by the demands of hundreds of millions of hungry bellies.

Warned by the Parisian professor, the French Government made strict regulations to prevent the extinction of the pearl-oyster, and, incidentally, of the Paumotuan. For the oyster they instituted the closed season or *rahui,* forbidding the taking of shells from certain atolls except at times stated. Experts examined the lagoons, and upon their recommendations a schedule of the *rahui* was drawn out, so that while diving might be permitted in one lagoon for successive seasons it might be prohibited in another over a term of years. This had caused a peripatetic school of divers, who went about the group from open la-

goon to open lagoon, as vagrants follow projects of railroad building. But the lagoons would never be again what they had been in wealth. The denuding had been too rapacious. However, the oysters were now given time to breed, and their food was taken care of to a degree, though France, the most scientific of nations, with the foremost physicists, chemists, and physicians, did not send her genius to her colonies.

To protect the divers and their families, alcohol was made contraband. It was unlawful to let a Paumotuan have intoxicants. The scenes of riotous debauchery once common and which always marked the diving season, in the merciless pitting of pearl- and shell-buyers against one another, were rare, but surreptitious sale and donation of drink were still going on.

Mormonism, Josephitism, and Seventh Day Adventism, strict sects as to stimulants, had aided the law, and the Lying Bills and McHenrys, the Mandels and the Kopckes, had a white god against them in their devil-take-the-hindmost treatment of the natives. France also confined the buying and selling in the Paumotus to French citizens, so that the non-Gauls by blood had been driven to kiss the flag they contemned. But business excused all subterfuges.

One day when the diving term was almost on, Mapuhi and I were talking on his veranda about the ventures of his life, and especially of his experiences under the sea.

"Come!" he said, with an indulgent smile upon his

flawed but noble face, "American, you and I will go upon the lagoon, and I will show you what may be strange to you."

Going to the end of his spit of land, we entered a canoe, and, with the chief paddling swiftly, moved towards the other side of the lagoon, away from the habitations of the Paumotuans. When a hundred yards or two offshore, Mapuhi shipped his paddle and let the outrigger canoe lie idly on the water.

"Look!" he said, appraisingly, "See the wonders of God prepared for his children!"

I took the *titea mata* he handed me, the four-sided wooden box with a pane of ordinary glass fixed in it, about fifteen inches square, and notched for the neck of the observer. Putting the glass below the surface and gazing through it, I was in fairy-land.

The floor of the lagoon was the superbest garden ever seen by the eye of man. A thousand forms of life, fixed and moving, firm and waving, coral and shells, fish of all the colors of the rainbow, of beauteous, of weird, and of majestic shape and size, decorated and animated this strange reserve man had invaded for food and profit. The giant furbelowed clams, largest of all mollusks, white, or tinged with red and saffron or brown-yellow, a corruscating glare of blue, violet, and yellow from above, reposed like a bed of dream tulips upon the shining parterre.

The coral was of an infinitude of shape: emerald one moment and sapphire the next, shot with colors from the sun and the living and growing things beneath. Springing from the sea-floor were cabbages

and roses, cauliflower and lilies, ivory fans and scarlet vases, delicate fluted columns, bushes of pale yellow coral, bouquets of red and green coral, shells of pink and purple, masses of weeds, brown and black sponges. It was a magic maze of submarine sculpture, fretwork, and flowers, and through all the interstices of the coral weaved in and out the brilliant-colored and often miraculously-molded fish and crustaceans. There were great masses of dark or sulphur-hued coral into which at any alarm these creatures darted and from which they peeped when danger seemed past. Snakes, blue, gold, or green bars on a velvet black-brown, glided in and out of the recesses, or coiled themselves about branches.

Big and small were these denizens of the lagoon. The tiny hermit-crab in a stolen mollusk-shell had on his movable house his much smaller paramour, who, also in her appropriated former tenement of a dead enemy, would spend the entire mating season thus waiting for his embrace. And now and again as I looked through the crystal water I saw the giant bulks of sharks, conger-eels, and other huge fish. These I pointed out to Mapuhi.

He peered through the *titea mata.*

"E!" he exclaimed. "For fifty years I have fought those demons. They will take one of us this *rahui* as before. It may be God's will, but I think the devil fights on the side of the beasts below. I myself have never been touched by them though I have killed many. When I think of the many years I entered the water all over these seas, and in blackest sin, I understand more and more what the elders say, that God is ever

watching over those He intends to use for His work. I have seen or known men to lose parts of themselves to the sharks, but to escape death. They prayed when in the very jaws of the *mao,* and were heard."

Mapuhi blew out his breath loudly, as if expelling an evil odor.

"*Tavana,* tell me about some of the bad deeds of sharks," I said.

"*Aue!* There are no good ones," he replied. "In Raiatea, near Tahiti, they were fishing at night for the *ava,* the fish something like the salmon. They had a net five meters high, and, after the people of the village had drawn the net round so that no fish could escape, a number of men dived from their canoes. You know they try to catch the *ava* by the tail and make it swim for the air, pulling the fisherman with it. That is an *arearea* [game]. The torches held by the women and children and the old people were lighting the water brightly when Tamaehu came up with his fish. He was baptized Tamaehu, but his common name was Marae. Just as he brought the *ava,* or the *ava* brought Tamaehu, to his canoe, and the occupants were about to lift the *ava* into the canoe, a shark caught Tamaehu by the right foot. He caught hold of the outrigger and tried to shake it off. It was not a big shark, but it was hungry. He shouted, and his companions leaned over and drove a harpoon into the shark, which let go his foot, tore out the harpoon, and swam away. Poor Tamaehu was hauled in, with his foot hanging loose, but in Raiatea the French doctor sewed it on again. You can see him now limping about, but he praises God for being alive."

"He well may; and there are many others to join with him?" I ventured, inquisitively.

"Do you know Piti, the woman of Raroia, in these Paumotu islands?" he asked. "No? If you go there, look for her. You will know her, for she has but one arm. Raroia has a large door to its lagoon. The bigger the door the bigger the sharks inside. The lagoons to which only small boats can enter have small sharks only. Piti was diving in the lagoon of Raroia during the season. She was bringing up shell from fifty feet below, and had several already in her canoe. She dived again, and, after seizing one shell, started to come up. Suddenly she saw a shark dart out of a coral bank. She became afraid. She did not pray. She forgot even to swim up. A man like me would not have been afraid. It is the shark that takes you when you do not see him that is to fear. Piti did nothing, and the *mao* took her left arm into his mouth. He closed his teeth and dragged off the flesh down to the elbow where he bit her arm in two. You know how when a shark bites, after he sinks his teeth into the meat, he twists his mouth, so as to make his teeth cut. That is the way God made him. This shark twisted and stripped off Piti's flesh as he drew down his teeth. When he bit off her lower arm he swam off to eat it, and she rose to the top. She put her good arm over the outrigger, and those other women paddled to her and pulled her into the canoe. The bone stuck out six inches below the flesh the shark had left. There were no doctors, but they put a healing plant over the arm. The wound would not heal, and ate and ate

inside for several years until the upper arm fell off at the shoulder-joint. Then she got well."

"Is the shark himself never frightened? A human being must seem a very queer fish to a shark. They do not always attack, do they?" I said. "I have swum where they were, and Jack of the *Snark,* Monsieur London, told that at Santa Ana in the Solomon Islands, when they were putting dynamite in the water to get a supply of fish, the natives leaped into the water and fought with the sharks for the fish. He said that the sharks had learned to rush to the spot whenever they heard dynamite exploded. The Solomon people had to grab the stunned fish away from the sharks, and one man who started for the surface with a fish came to the boat with only half of it, as a shark had taken away the head."

"E!" answered Mapuhi, "Sharks are devils, but the devils are not without fear, and sometimes they become *neneva,* and do things perhaps they did not think about. At Marutea Atoll, Tau, a strong man, caught a shark about four feet long. They had a feast on the beach, and Tau, to show how strong he was, picked up the shark and played with it after it had been on the sand for some minutes. The mouth of the *mao* was near his arm, and it opened and closed, and took off the flesh of the upper arm. He got well, but he never could use that arm. Right here in Takaroa, in the *rahui* of seven years ago, a man, diving for shell, met a shark on the bottom. He was crawling along the bottom, looking for a good shell, when the shark turned a corner and struck him square in the mouth. The

shark was a little one, not more than three feet long, but so frightened was he that he bit the man's two cheeks right off, the cheeks and the lips, so that to-day you see all his teeth all the time. He has become a good Mormon."

Mapuhi laughed. I looked at him, and his face was filled with mirth. He was not deceived as to the heart of man. Devout he was, but he had dealt too long with brown and white, and had been too many years a sinner—indeed, one of the vilest, if rumor ran true —not to have drunk from the well-springs of the passions. Mapuhi wore a blue loin-cloth and a white shirt. The tails of the latter floated in the soft breeze, and the bosom was open, displaying his Herculean chest. We could see his house in the distance across the lagoon, and now and then he kept it in his eyes for a minute. He had gone far for a man whose father had been a savage and an eater of his enemies. The Mormon tenets permit a proper pride of possession, like the Mohammedan philosophy. One can rejoice that God has signaled one out for holding in trust the material assets of life. The bankers of the world have long known this about their God. Mapuhi had become thoughtful, and, as I was sure he had other and more astonishing facts about the sharks not yet related, I suggested that other archipelagos were also cursed by the presence and rapacity of the *mao*.

"In Samoa," said Mapuhi, "the shark is not called *mao* or *mako* as in Nuku-Hiva, but *mălie*. There are no lagoons in Samoa, for there are no atolls, but high mountains and beaches. Now the *mălie* is the shark that swims around the islands, but the deep-sea shark,

the one that lives out of sight of land, is the *mălietua.* The Samoans are a wise people in a rich country. They are not like us poor Paumotuans with only cocoanuts and fish, but the Samoans have bananas, breadfruit, taro, oranges, and cocoanuts and fish, too. They are a happy people. Of course, I am a Paumotuan, and I would not live away from here. Once, a woman I had—when I was not a Mormon—wanted me to take my money and go and live in Tahiti, which is gay. I considered it, and even counted my money. But when I thought of my home and my people, I thrust her out as a bad woman. Now in Manua in Samoa was a half-caste, and his daughter was the queen of Manua. The half-caste's name was Alatua Iunga, and he was one day fishing for *bonito* in the way we do, with a pearl-shell hook, when one of the four or five Samoans with him said, 'There is a small shark. Put on a piece of *bonito,* and we will catch the *mălie.*' They did so, and then they let their canoe float while they ate boiled taro and dried squid.

"Then one of the Samoans said, 'I see a shark.' Others looked, and they said, also, 'A shark is rising from the deep.' Now a deep-water shark, as I said, is a *mălietua* and is not to be smiled at. Iunga said, 'Get the big hook and bait it!' Then the shark rose, twenty feet of its body out of the water, and its jaws opened. They closed on the outrigger of the canoe, and bit one end clear off. Iunga said again, 'Get the hook!' He thought the shark would take the baited hook, and then they could throw the rope attached to the hook overboard, and the *mălietua* would be troubled with the rope at the end of his nose and would

cease to attack them. They could see the shark all this time. He was a blue shark with a flat tail, and was forty feet long at least. Their canoe was just half as long, and they thought of Iona [Jonah]. The *perofeta* was swallowed by a shark, because a whale can swallow only little fish. The *mălietua* would not take the hook, and, leaving the outrigger, rammed the stern of the canoe. The shock almost threw them into the water. All were paddling hard to escape, for they knew that this shark was a real devil and sought to destroy them. Iunga, who was steering the *va aalo,* rose up and struck the shark many times on his nose. This angered him, but Iunga kept it up, as their one chance of safety. There is a saying in Samoa, *'O le mălie ma le tu'tu,'* which is, 'Each shark has its pay.' Iunga and all the Samoans were religious men, though not Mormons, and they sang a hymn as they paddled hard. They made their peace with the Creator, who heard them. For over two miles the race was run. The *mălietua* pursued the *va aalo,* and Iunga jabbed him with the big paddle. At last they were nearly all dead from weariness, and so Iunga sheered the canoe abruptly to the right, intending to smash on the reef as a chance for their lives. But just as the *va aalo* swerved, to strike upon the coral rocks, they rested on their paddles, and they saw that the shark had disappeared. If that shark had kept on for another minute it would have killed itself on the reef."

"Mapuhi," I verified, "I, too, have been to Manua, and heard the story from the kin of Alatua Iunga, whom I knew as Arthur Young, the trader. He be-

came very pious after that, and was a great help to the *mitinare*."

The republican king of the atolls may have thought he detected in my voice or manner a raillery I did not mean to imply, for he inspected my countenance seriously. He had long ago discovered that white men often speak with a forked tongue. But I was sincere, because I had never known a joyous, unfrightened person to become suddenly religious, while I had witnessed a hundred conversions from fear of the devil, hunger, or the future. However, Mapuhi, who was an admirable story-teller, with a dramatic manner and a voice of poesy, had reserved his *chef d'œuvre* for the last.

"American," he said, "If I were a scoffer or unbeliever to-day and I met Huri-Huri and he informed me of what God had done for him, and his neighbors who had seen the thing itself brought their proof to his words, I would believe in God's goodness. Have you seen Huri-Huri at Rangiora? He lives at the village of Avatoru. He has a long beard. Ah, you have not seen him. Yes, very few Paumotuans have beards, but no Paumotuan ever had the experience of Huri-Huri. He was living in his village of Avatoru, and was forty years old. He was a good diver but getting old for that work. It takes the young to go deep and stay down long. As we grow older that weight of water hurts us. Huri-Huri was lucky. He was getting many large shells, and he felt sure he would pick up one with a valuable pearl in it. He drank the rum the white trader poisons my people with, and he spent

his money for tobacco, beef, and cloth. He had a watch but it did not go, and he had some foolish things the trader had sold him. But here he was forty years old, and so poor that he had to go from atoll to atoll wherever there was a *rahui* because he wanted all these foreign goods.

"This time he was diving in the lagoon of Rangiroa. He was all alone in his canoe, and was in deep water. He had gone down several times, and had in his canoe four or five pairs of shells. He looked again and saw another pair, and plunged to the bottom. He had the shells in his sack and was leaving the bank when he saw just above him a shark so big that, as he said, it could have bitten him in half as a man eats a banana. The shark thrust down its nose toward Huri-Huri, and he took out his shells and held them against the beast. He kept its nose down for half a minute but then was out of breath. He was about to die, he believed, unless he could reach the air without the shark following him. He threw himself on the shark's back, and put his hands in the fish's gills, and so stopped or partly stopped the shark's breathing. The shark did not know what to make of that, and hurried upward, headed for the surface by the diver. Huri-Huri was afraid to let go even there, because he knew the *mao* would turn on him and tear him to pieces. But he took several long breaths in the way a diver understands, and still held on and tore the shark's breathing-places.

"Now the shark was angry and puzzled, and so rushed to the bottom again, but with the man on his back. The shark had not been able to enjoy the air at the top because he breathes water and not air.

Launch towing canoes to diving grounds in lagoon

Divers voyaging in Paumotu atolls

Huri-Huri closed his gill openings, and piloted him, and so he came up again and again descended. By pulling at the gills the shark's head was brought up and he had to rise. All this time Huri-Huri was thinking hard about God and his own evil life. He knew that each second might be his last one in life, and he prayed. He thought of Iona who was saved out of the shark's belly in the sea where Christ was born, and he asked Iona to aid him. And all the while he jerked at the gills, which are the shark's lungs. He knew that the shark was dying all the time, but the question was how long could the shark himself hold out, and which would weaken first. Up and down they went for half an hour, the shark's blood pouring out over Huri-Huri's hands as he minute after minute tore at the gills. Now he could direct the shark any way, and often he guided him toward the beach of the lagoon. The shark would swim toward it but when he felt the shallow water would turn. But after many minutes the shark had to stay on top altogether, because he was too far gone to dive, and finally Huri-Huri steered him right upon the sand. Huri-Huri fell off the *mao* and crawled up further, out of reach of him.

"When the people on shore who had watched the strange fight between the *mao* and the man came to them both, the fish could barely move his tail, and Huri-Huri was like dead. Every bit of skin was rubbed off his chest, legs, and arms, and he was bleeding from dozens of places. The shark's body is as rough as a file. When Huri-Huri opened his eyes on his mat in his house, and looked about and heard his wife speak to him, and heard his friends about say that he was the

bravest and strongest Paumotuan who ever lived, he said: 'My brothers, praise God! I called on Iona, and the prophet heard me, and taught me how to conquer the devil that would have killed me in my sin!' They listened and were astonished. They thought the first thing Huri-Huri would say would be, 'Give me a drink of rum!' American, that man is seventy years old now, and for thirty years he has preached about God and sin. Iona was three days and nights in the shark's belly, but nobody could ride a shark for a half-hour, and conquer him, except a Paumotuan and a diver."

Mapuhi was glad to be corroborated by Linnæus in his opinion that a white shark and not a whale had been the divine instrument in teaching the doubting Jonah to upbraid Nineveh even at the risk of his life. The great Swedish naturalist says:

> Jonam Prophetum ut veteris Herculem trinoctem, in hujus ventriculo, tridui spatro baesisse, verisimile est.

Also, Mapuhi was deeply interested by my telling him that at Marseilles a shark was caught in which was a man in complete armor. He had me describe a suit of armor as I had seen it in the notable collection in Madrid. He was struck by its resemblance to the modern diver's suit.

"In the Paumotus," he said, "the French Government forbids the use of the *scaphandre* because it cheated the native of his birthright. The merchants, the rich men of Tahiti, could buy and use such diving machinery, but the Paumotuan could not. The natives asked the French government to send away the *scaphandre,* and to permit the searching for shells by the

human being only. I had one of the machines. I could go deeper in it than any diver in the world, so the merchants said. I would go out in my cutter with my men and the *scaphandre*. I did not put on the whole suit, but only the rubber jacket, on the brass collar of which the helmet was screwed. I fixed this jacket tightly around my waist so that no water could enter, and fastened it about my wrists. Then, with my legs uncovered, I jumped into the lagoon. I had big pieces of lead on my back and breast so as not to be overturned by the weight of the helmet, and an air-hose from the helmet to the pump in the cutter. I would work three hours at a time, but had to come up many times for relief from the pressure.

"One day I was in this suit at the bottom of the lagoon of Hikueru. I had filled my net with shells, and had signaled for it to be hauled up. I was examining a ledge of shells when I felt something touch my helmet. It was a sea-snake about ten feet long and of bright color. It had a long, thin neck, and it was poisonous. I snatched my knife from my belt, and before the snake could bite me I drove the knife into it. It was attacking the glass of my helmet, and not my legs, fortunately. That snake has its enemy, too, for when it lies on the surface to enjoy the sun the sea-eagle falls like a thunderbolt from the sky, seizes it by the back of the head, and flies away with it.

"Another time when I was in the suit, a *puhi*, a very big eel, wrapped itself about me. I had a narrow escape but I killed it with my knife. In the olden days in Hikueru I would have perished, for that *puhi* eel, the conger-eel, was taboo, sacred as a god, here and

in many islands. To eat that eel or harm him was to break the taboo. More than eighty people of Fakaofa were driven from that island for eating the *puhi,* and they drifted for weeks before they reached Samoa. The *vaaroa,* the long-mouthed eel, is dangerous to the diver. It is eight feet long, and Amaru, of Fakarava had the calf of his leg bitten off by one."

A week I could have listened to Mapuhi. I was back in my childhood with Jules Verne, Ballantyne, and Oliver Optic. Actual and terrifying as were the harrowing incidents of the diving related by the giant, they found constant comparison in my mind with the deeds of my boyish heroes. After all, these Paumotuans were children—simple, honest, happy children. The fate that had denied them the necessaries of our environment, or even the delicious foods and natural pleasures of the high islands, Tahiti and the Marquesas, had endowed them with health, satisfaction with a rigid fare, and an incomparable ability to meet the hardships of their life and the blows of extraordinary circumstance with fortitude and persistent optimism. They had no education and were happier for the lack of it. The white man had impressed their instincts and habits but shallowly. Even their very austerity of surroundings had kept them freer than the Tahitians from the poisonous gifts and suicidal customs of the foreigner. Their God was near and dear to them, and a mighty fortress in time of trouble.

While Mapuhi talked the canoe had returned with the currents nearer to his house, from which we had embarked. It was conspicuous over all the other homes on the *motu,* though it was a very ordinary wooden

structure of five or six rooms. It was not a fit frame for Mapuhi, I thought. This son of the sea and lagoon was suited better to a canoe, a cutter, or the deck of a schooner. He had a companionship with this warm salt water, with the fish in it, and the winds that blew over it, exceeding that of any other man. He drove the canoe on the sand, and we stepped ashore. I lingered by the water as he walked on to his store. In his white, fluttering shirt, and his blue *pareu,* bare-legged and bareheaded, there was a natural distinction and atmosphere of dignity about him that was grandeur. Kingship must have originated in the force and bearing of such men, shepherds or sea-rovers.

CHAPTER XII

History of the pearl hunger—Noted jewels of past—I go with Nohea to the diving—Beautiful floor of the lagoon—Nohea dives many times—Escapes shark narrowly—Descends 148 feet—No pearls reward us—Mandel tells of culture pearls.

MUCH of the mystery and myth of these burning atolls was concerned with the quest of pearls. In all the world those gems had been a subject of romance, and legend had draped their search with a myriad marvels. Poets and fictionists in many tongues had embroidered their gossamer fabric with these exquisite lures, the ornament of beauty, the treasures of queen and odalisque, *mondaine* and dancer, image and shrine, since humans began to adorn themselves with more delicate things than the skins and teeth of animals. A thousand crimes had their seed in greed for the possession of these sensuous sarcophagi of dead worms. A million men had labored, fought, and died to hang them about the velvet throats of the mistresses of the powerful. Hundreds of thousands had perished to fetch them from the depths of the sea. History and novel were filled with the struggle of princes and Cyprians, merchants, adventurers, and thieves for ropes of pearls or single specimens of rarity. Krishna discovered pearls in the ocean and presented them to his goddess daughter. The Ethiopians all but worshiped them, and the Persians believed them rain-drops that had entered the shells while the oysters sunned themselves on the beach. Two thousand years before our

era, a millennium before Rome was even mud, the records of the Middle Kingdom enumerated pearls as proper payments for taxes. When Alexander the Great was conquering, the Chinese inventoried them as products of their country. The "Url-Ja," a Chinese dictionary of that date, says "they are very precious."

Solomon's pearls came from the Persian Gulf, India, and Ceylon, and the queen of Sheba's too. Rivers of Britain gave the author of the "Commentaries" pearls to dedicate to Venus Genetrix, and to present to that lovely assassin who melted two, costing ten million sesterces, for a love philter, and seduced two Cæsars. Who can forget the salad Philip II of Spain, the uxorious inquisitor, set upon the royal table for his wife, Elizabeth of Valois, the leaves of which were of emeralds, the vinegar of rubies, the oil of topazes, and the salt of pearls? What more appetizing dish for a royal bride? The Orientals make medicine of them to-day, and I myself have seen a sultan burn pearls to make lime for chewing with the betel-nut.

The New World offered fresh preserves to pearl-hunters; primeval grounds drew a horde of lusty blades to harry the red men's treasure-house. South and Central America fed the pearl hunger that grew with the more even distribution of wealth through commerce, and the rise of stout merchants on the Continent and the British Islands. The Spanish king who gave his name to the Philippines got from Venezuela a pearl that balanced an eighth of a pound. I saw it in Madrid. These Paumotus and Australasia were the last to answer yes to man's ceaseless demand that the earth and

the waters thereof yield him more than bread for the sweat of his brow. On many maps these atolls are yet inscribed as the Pearl Islands. About their glorious lagoons was a mist of obscurity and of wonder for centuries. Besides dangers to vessels, the cannibalism of savages, the lack of any food except cocoanuts and fish, and stories of strange happenings, there were accounts of divers who sank deeper in the sea than science said was possible, and of priceless pearls plundered or bought for a drinking-song.

Custom-houses and organized commerce had rung down the curtain on the extravaganza of the past, but the romance of man wrestling with the forces of nature in the element from which he originally came, now so deadly to him, was yet a supreme attraction. The day of the opening of the *rahui* came none too soon for me. Nohea, my host, was to dive, and we had arranged that I was to be in his canoe. I was assured by Mapuhi, and by Captain Nimau and Kopcke, that despite the fact that his youth was gone, Nohea was the best diver in Takaroa, and especially the shrewdest judge of the worth of a piece of diving ground.

All the village went to the scene of the diving in a fleet of cutters and canoes, sailing or paddling according to the goal and craft. Nohea and I had a largish canoe, which, though with a small sail woven of pandanus straw, could easily be paddled by us. He had staked out a spot upon the lagoon that had no recognizable bearings for me, but which he had long ago selected as his arena of action. He identified it by its distance from certain points, and its association with the sun's position at a fixed hour.

We had risen before dawn to attend the Mormon church service initiating the *rahui*. The rude coral temple was crowded when the young elders from Utah began the service. Mapuhi, Nohea, and leaders of the village sat on the forward benches. The prayer of elder Overton was for the physical safety of the elected in the pursuit they were about to engage in.

"Thou knowest, O God," he supplicated, "that in the midst of life we are in death."

"E! E! Parau mau!" echoed the old divers, which is, "Yea, Verily!"

"These, thy children, O God, are about to go under the sea, but not like the Chosen People in Israel, for whom the waters divided and let them go dry-shod. But grant, O God, who didst send an angel to Joseph Smith to show him the path to Thee through the Book of Mormon, who didst lead thy new Chosen People through the deserts and over the mountains, among wild beasts and the savages who knew Thee not, to Thy capital on earth, Salt Lake City, that thy loving worshipers here assembled shall come safely through this day, and that Thy sustaining hand shall support them in those dark places where other wild beasts lie in wait for them!"

"Parau mau!" said all, and the eyes of some of the women were wet, for they thought of sons and lovers, fathers and brothers, mothers and sisters, who had gone out upon the lagoon, and who had died there among the coral rocks, or of whom only pieces had been brought back. They sang a song of parting, and of commending their bodies to the Master of the universe, and then with many greetings and hearty laughter and a hun-

dred jests about expected good fortune, we parted to put the final touches on the equipment for *la pêche des huitres nacrières.* Forgetting the quarter of an hour of serious prayer and song in the temple, the natives were now bubbling with eagerness for the hunt. Mapuhi himself was like a child on the first day of vacation. These Paumotuans had an almost perfect community spirit, for, while a man like Mapuhi became rich, actually he made and conserved what the duller natives would have failed to create from the resources about them, or to save from the clutches of the acquisitive white, and he was ready to share with his fellows at any time. He, as all other chiefs, was the choice of the men of the atoll at a quadrennial election, and held office and power by their sufferance and his own merits. None might go hungry or unhoused when others had plenty. Civilization had not yet inflicted on them its worst concomitants. They were too near to nature.

After a light breakfast of bread and savory fried fish, to which I added jam and coffee for myself, Nohea and I pushed off for our wonder-fishing. In the canoe we had, besides paddles, two *titea mata,* the glass-bottomed boxes for seeing under the surface of the water, a long rope, an iron-hooped net, a smaller net or bag of *coir,* twenty inches deep and a foot across, with three-inch meshes, a bucket, a pair of plain-glass spectacles for under-water use, a jar of drinking-water, and food for later in the day.

The sun was already high in the unclouded sky when we lifted the mat sail, and glided through the pale-blue pond, the shores of which were a melting contrast of ala-

baster and viridescence. All about us were our friends in their own craft, and the single motor-boat of the island, Mapuhi's, towed a score of cutters and canoes to their appointed places. A slender breeze sufficed to set us, with a few tacks, at our exact spot. We furled our sail, stowed it along the outrigger, and were ready for the plunge. We did not anchor the canoe because of the profundity of the water and because it is not the custom to do so. I sat with a paddle in my hand for a few minutes but laid it down when Nohea picked up the looking-glass. He put the unlidded box into the water and his head into it and gazed intently for a few moments, moving the frame about to sweep the bottom of the lagoon with his wise eyes.

The water was as smooth as a mirror. I saw the bed of the inland sea as plainly as one does the floor of an aquarium a few feet deep. No streams poured débris into it, nor did any alluvium cloud its crystal purity. Coral and gravel alone were the base of its floor and sides, and the result was a surpassing transparency of the water not believable by comparison with any other lake.

"How far is that *toa aau?*" I asked, and pointed to a bank of coral.

Nohea sized up the object, took his head from the *titea mata,* and replied, "Sixty feet."

At that distance I could, unaided, see plainly a piece of coral as big as my hand. The view was as variegated as the richest landscape—a wilderness of vegetation, of magnificent marine verdure, sloping hills and high towers with irregular windows, in which the sunshine

streamed in a rainbow of gorgeous colors; and the shells and bodies of scores of zoöphytes dwelling upon the structures gleamed and glistened like jewels in the flood of light. About these were patches of snow-white sand, blinding in refracted brilliancy, and beside them green bushes or trees of herbage-covered coral, all beautiful as a dream-garden of the Nereids and as imaginary. Even when I withdrew my eyes from this fantastic scene, the lagoon and shore were hardy less fabulous. The palms waved along the beach as banners of seduction to a sense of sheer animism, of investiture of their trunks and leaves with the spirits of the atoll. Not seldom I had heard them call my name in the darkness, sometimes in invitation to enchantment and again in warning against temptation. The cutters or canoes of the village were like lily-pads upon the placid water, far apart, white or brown, the voices of the people whispers in the calm air. I wished I were a boy to know to the full the feeling of adventure among such divine toys which had brought glad tears to my eyes in my early wanderings.

The canoe had drifted, and Nohea slipped over its side and again spied with the glass. I, too, looked through mine and saw where he indicated a ridge or bank of coral upon which were several oyster-shells. Nohea immediately climbed into the canoe and, resting upon the side prayed a few moments, bowing his head and nodding as if in the temple. Then he began to breathe heavily. For several minutes he made a great noise, drawing in the air and expelling it forcibly, so that he seemed to be wasting energy. I was almost convinced that he exaggerated the value of his emotions and

explosive sounds, but his impassive face and remembrance of his race's freedom from our exhibition conceit, drove the foolish thought away. His chest, very capacious normally, was bursting with stored air, a storage beyond that of our best trained athletes; and without a word he went over the side and allowed his body to descend through the water. He made no splash at all but sank as quietly as a stone. I fastened my head in the *titea mata* and watched his every movement. He had about his waist a *pareu* of calico, blue with large white flowers,—the design of William Morris,—and a sharp sailor's sheath-knife at the belt. Around his neck was a sack of cocoanut-fiber, and on his right hand a glove of common denim. Almost all his robust brown body was naked for his return to the sea-slime whence his first ancestor had once crawled.

Down he went through the pellucid liquid until at about ten feet the resistance of the water stopped his course and, animated bubble as he was, would have pushed him to the air again. But Nohea turned in a flash, and with his feet uppermost struck out vigorously. He forced himself down with astonishing speed and in twenty seconds was at his goal. He caught hold of a gigantic goblet of coral and rested himself an instant as he marked his object, the ledge of darker rocks on which grew the shells. There were sharp-edged shapes and branching plant-like forms, which, appearing soft as silk from above would wound him did he graze them with his bare skin. He moved carefully about and finally reached the shells. One he gripped with the gloved hand, for the shell, too, had serrated edges, and, working it to and fro, he broke it loose from

its probable birthplace and thrust it into his sack. Immediately he attacked the other, and as quickly detached it. He stooped down and looked closely all about him. He then sprang up, put his arms over his head, his palms pressed one on the other, and shot toward the surface. I could see him coming toward me like a bolt from a catapult. I held a paddle to move the canoe from his path if he should strike it, and to meet him the trice he flashed into the ether.

The diver put his right arm over the outrigger boom, and opening his mouth gulped the air as does the *bonito* when first hauled from the ocean. I was as still as death. In a séance once I was cautioned not to speak during the materializations, as the disturbance might kill the medium. I recalled that unearthly silence, for the moment of emergence was the most fatal to the diver. His senses after the terrible pressure of such a weight upon his body were as abnormal and acute as a man's whose nerves have been stripped by flaying. The change in a few seconds from being laden and hemmed in by many tons of water to the lightness of the atmosphere was ravaging. Slowly the air was respired, and gradually his system,—heart, glands, lungs, and blood,—resumed its ordinary rhythm, and his organs functioned as before his descent. Several minutes passed before he raised his head from the outrigger, opened his eyes, which were suffused with blood, and said in a low tone of the deaf person, *"E tau Atua e!"* He was thanking his God for the gift of life and health. He had been tried with Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego, though not by fire.

Nohea lifted himself into the canoe, and took the sack of *coir* from his neck. I removed the two pairs of shells with the reverence one might assume in taking the new-born babe from its first cradle. They were Holy Grails to me who had witnessed their wringing from the tie-ribs of earth. They were shaped like a stemless palm-leaf fan, about eight inches tall and ten wide, rough and black; and still adhering to their base was a tangle of dark-green silky threads, the byssus or strong filament which attaches them to their fulcrum, the ledge. It was the byssus which Nohea had to wrench from the rock. I laid down the shells and restored the sack to Nohea, who sat immobile, perhaps thoughtless. Another brief space of time, and he smiled and clapped his hands.

"That was ten fathoms," he said. "Paddle toward that clump of trees" (they were a mile away), "and we will seek deeper water."

A few score strokes and we were nearer the center of the lagoon. With my bare eyes I could not make out the quality of the bottom but only its general configuration. Nohea said the distance was twenty fathoms. The looking-glass disclosed a long ledge with a flat shelf for a score of feet, and he said he made out a number of large shells. It took the acutest concentration on my part to find them, with his direction, for his eyes were twice as keen as mine from a lifetime's usage upon his natural surroundings. We sacrificed our birthright of vivid senses to artificial habits, lights, and the printed page. Nohea made ready to go down, but changed slightly his method and equipment. He dropped the

iron-hooped net into the water by its line and allowed it to sink to the ledge. Then he raised it a few feet so that it would swing clear of the bottom.

"It will hold my shells and indicate to me exactly where the canoe is," he explained. "At this depth, 120 feet, I want to rest immediately on reaching the surface, and not to have to swim to the canoe. I have not dived for many months, and I am no longer young."

He attached the line to the outrigger, and then, after a fervent prayer to which I echoed a nervous amen, he began his breathing exercises. Louder than before and more actively he expanded his lungs until they held a maximum of stored oxygen, and then with a smile he slid through the water until he reversed his body and swam. In his left hand now he had a shell, a single side of a bivalve; and this he moved like an oar or paddle, catching the water with greater force, and pulling himself down with it and the stroke of the other arm, as well as a slight motion of the feet. The entire movement was perfectly suited to his purpose, and he made such rapid progress that he was beside the hoop-net in less than a minute. He had a number of pairs of shells stripped from the shelf and in the swinging net in a few seconds more, and then, drawn by others he discerned further along the ledge, he swam, and dragged himself by seizing the coral forms, and reached another bank. I paddled the canoe gently behind him. I lost sight of him then completely. Either he was hidden behind a huge stone obelisk or he had gone beyond my power of sight.

A gigantic black shape swam into view near the oscillating hoop, and a horror swept over me. It disap-

peared, but Nohea was still missing. The time beat in my veins like a pendulum. Every throb seemed a second, and they began to count themselves in my brain. How long was it since Nohea had left me? A minute and a half? Two minutes? That is an age without breathing. Something must have injured him. Slowly the moments struck against my heart. I could not look through the *titea mata* any longer. Another sixty seconds and despair had chilled me so I shook in the hot sunshine as with ague. I was cold and weak. Suddenly I felt a pull at the rope, the canoe moved slightly, and hope grew warm in me. I perceived an agitation of the water gradually ascending, and in a few instants the diver sprang out of the lagoon to his waist. He threw his arm over the outrigger, and bent down in agony. His suffering was written in the contortion of his face, the blood in his eyes, and a writhing of his whole body. He gasped madly at his first emergence, and then his bosom rose and fell in lessening spasms. The cramp which had convulsed his form relaxed, and, as minute after minute elapsed, his face lost its rigidity, his pulse slackened to normal, and he said feebly, *"E tau Atua e!"* With my assistance he hauled himself into the canoe and lay half prone.

"You saw no shark?" I asked.

"I saw his shadow, but it was not he that detained me. I saw a bank which might hold shells and I explored it. We will see what I have."

We pulled up the hoop-net, and in it were thirteen pairs of shells. These were larger than the others, older, and, as he said, from a more advantageous place for feeding, so that their residents, being better nour-

ished had made larger and finer houses for themselves. Some of the thirteen were eighteen inches across. He said that he had roamed seventy feet on the bottom, and he had been down two and a half minutes. He had made observation of the ledges all about and intended going a little deeper. I had but to look at the rope of the net to gage the distance for it was marked with knots and bits of colored cotton to give the lengths like the marks on a lead-line on shipboard. I wanted to demur to his more dangerous venture, but I did not. This was his avocation and adventure, his war with the elements, and he must follow it and conquer or fail.

Again he dived, and this time at 148 feet. This was almost the limit of men in suits with air pumps or oxygen-tanks, and they were always let down and brought up gradually, to accustom their blood to the altering pressure. Half an hour or an hour was often consumed in hauling a diver up from the depth from which Nohea sprang in a few seconds. His transcendent courage and consummate skill were matched by his body's trained resistance to the effect of such extreme pressure of water and the remaining without breathing for so long a time. I could appreciate his achievements more than most people, for I had seen the divers of many races at work in many waters. Ninety feet was the boundary of all except the Paumotuans and those who used machines. But here was Nohea exceeding that by sixty feet in my view, and I knew that greater depths must be attained. Impelled by an instantaneous urge to contrast my own capabilities with Nohea's, I measured off thirty feet on the line, and, putting it in his hands to hold, I breathed to my fullest and leaped

overboard. At three lengths of my figure, less than eighteen feet, I experienced alarm and pain. I unloosed the hoop and it swayed down to the end of the five fathoms of rope, while I kicked and pulled, and after an interminable period I had barely touched it again before I became convinced that if I did not breathe in another second I would open my mouth. Nohea knew my plight, for he yanked at the rope, and with his effort and my own frantic exertion I made the air, and humbly hugged the outrigger until I was myself. Thirty feet! And Nohea had brought up the shells from 148.

He paid dearly. Several times of the score that he probed the deeper retreats of the oysters, he was prostrated for minutes upon his egress and in throes of severe pain during the readjustment of pressure; but he continued to pursue his fascinating and near-fatal employment until by afternoon a heap of heavy, darkish bivalves lay in the canoe. My curiosity had been heated since I had lifted the first shell, and it was with increasing impatience that I waited for the milder but not less interesting phase of his labor, the scrutiny of the interior of the shells for pearls.

> There are two moments in a diver's life;
> One, when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge;
> Then, when, a prince, he rises with his pearl.

The poet visioned Nohea's emotions, perhaps, but he had schooled himself to postpone his satisfaction until the day's harvest was gathered. When we had paddled the canoe into shallow waters, and the sun was slanting fast down the western side of earth, Nohea surrendered

himself to the realization or dissipation of his dream. He knew that a thousand shells contain no pearls, that the princely state came to few in decades. But the diver had the yearning and credulous mind of the gold prospector, and lived in expectation as did he. The glint of a pebble, the sheen of yellow sand, set his pulse to beating more rapidly; and so with the diver. He knew that pearls of great value had been found many times, and that one such trove might make him rich for life, independent of daily toil, and free of the traps and pangs of the plunge.

Nohea thrust his knife between the blades of a bivalve and pried open his resisting jaws. True pearls lie in the tissues of the oyster, generally in the rear of the body and sealed in a pocket. Nohea laid down the parted shell and seized the animal, and dissected his boneless substance in a gesture of eager inquiry. I watched his actions with as sharp response, and sighed as each oyster in turn was thrown into the bucket, in which was sea-water. When all had been submitted to the test and no pearl had flashed upon our hopeful eyes we examined the shells, trusting that though the true pearls had escaped us we might find blisters, those which, having a point of contact with the shell, are thus not perfect in shape and skin, but have a flaw. These often have large value, if they can be skinned to advantage; and the diver put his smaller hopes upon them.

With pearls, orient or blister, eliminated, the primary and actually more important basis of the industry appealed to Nohea. He estimated the weight and value of the shells, which would be transported to London for manufacture in the French Department of the Oise

into the black pearl buttons that ornament women's dresses. These Paumotuan shells were celebrated for their black borders, *nacre á bord noir,* more valuable than the gold-lipped product of the Philippines, but a third cheaper than the silver-lipped shells of Australia. With at least the comfort of a heavy catch of this less remunerative though hardly less beautiful creation of the oyster, Nohea pointed out to me that the formation of the mother-of-pearl or nacre on the shells was from left to right, as if the oyster were right minded.

"When the whorls of a shell are from right to left," he said, "that shell is valuable as a curiosity. The people of Asia, the Chinese, pay well for it, and a Chinese shell-buyer now here told me that in Initia [India] they weighed it with gold in old times. In China they keep such shells in the temples to hold the sacred oil, and the priests administer magic medicine in them."

Nohea completed the round of the day's undertaking by macerating the oysters and throwing them into the lagoon that their spawn might be released for another generation. He cut off and threaded the adhesive muscle of the oyster, the *tatari ioro,* to eat when dried. It was something like the scallop or abalone abductor muscle sold in our markets. The shells would be put into the sheds or warehouses to dry and to be beaten and rubbed so as to reduce the bulk of their backs, which have no value but weigh heavily.

After we had supped, Nohea and the older divers gathered at Mapuhi's for a discussion of the day's luck, and I went along to the coterie of traders by Lying Bill's firm's store. A cocoanut-husk fire was burning, and about it sat Bill, McHenry, Llewellyn, Nimau, Mandel,

Kopcke, and others. Mandel was the most notable pearl-buyer and expert here, with an office in Paris and a warehouse in Papeete. He was huge and with gross features, and was rated as the richest man in these South Seas. His own schooner had dropped anchor off Takaroa a few days before with Mrs. Mandel in command. He might make the bargain for pearls, but she would do the paying and squeeze the most out of the price to the native. She ruled with no soft hand, and in her long life had solved many difficult problems in money-grubbing in this archipelago. Her husband was the head of the Mandel tribe, but sons and daughter all knew the dancing boards of the schooner and the intricacies of the pearl-market. Usually Mandel stayed in Tahiti or visited Paris, but the *rahui* in Takaroa was too promising a prize for any of them to remain away, and all of the family were diligent in intrigue and negotiation. Mandel had handled the finest pearls of the Paumotus for many years. I had seen Mrs. Mandel come ashore, in a sheeny yellow Mother-Hubbard or Tahitian *ahu vahine* and a cork helmet; but she made her home on her schooner, to which she invited those from whom her good man had purchased shell or pearls.

Pearls were, of course, the subject of the talk about the fire. Toae, a Hikueru man, had found one, and Mandel had it already. He showed it to me, a pea-shaped, dusky object, with no striking beauty.

"I may be mistaken," said Mandel, "but I believe this outside layer is poorer than one inside. In Paris my employees will peel it and see. It is taking a chance, but we have a second sight about it. You know a pearl is like an onion, with successive skins, and we take off

a number sometimes. It reduces the size but may increase the luster. Also we are using the ultra-violet ray to improve color. I saw a pearl that cost a hundred thousand francs sold for three hundred thousand after the ray was used on it. You know a pearl is produced only by a sick oyster. It is a pathological product like gall-stones, and it is mostly caused by a tapeworm getting into the oyster's shell, though a grain of sand is often the nucleus. The oyster feels the grating or irritating thing and secretes nacre to cover it. The tapeworm is embalmed in this mother-of-pearl, and the sand smoothed with it. The material, the nacre, is the same as the interior of the shell, and the oyster seems not to stop covering the intruder when the itching has stopped but keeps on out of habit. And so forms small and big pearls. Now a blister is generally over a bug or snail, though sometimes it is a stop-gap to keep out a borer who is drilling through the shell from the outside. The blisters are usually hollow, whereas a pearl has a yellow center with the carbonate of lime in concentric prisms. An orient or true pearl is formed in the muscles of the oyster and does not touch the shell; but the blister, which generally is part of the shell, may have been started in the oyster's sac or folds, and have dropped out or been released to hold between the oyster and the shell. With these we cut away the outside down to the original pearl. A blister itself is only good for a brooch or an ornament, but I have gotten five or ten thousand francs for the best."

Captain Nimau, who was only less clever than Mandel in the lore of pearls, said that, as the lagoons were often three hundred feet or deeper in places, it was probable

that larger pearls than ever yet brought up were in these untouched caches.

"The Paumotuan has descended 180 feet," said Nimau. "I have plumbed his dive. A diver with a suit cannot go any deeper, and so we never have explored the possible beds 'way down. The whole face of the outer reef may be a vast oyster-bed, but the surf prevents us from investigating. I have seen in December and March of many years millions of baby oysters floating into the lagoons with the rising tide, to remain there. They never go out again but prefer the quiet life where they can grow up strong and big. The singular thing about these pearl-oysters is that they can move about. When you try to break them loose from the ledge they prove to be very firmly attached by their byssus, but they travel from one shelf to another when they need a change of food. It is not sand they are most afraid of. They can spit their nacre on it if it gets in their shells; but it is the little red crab that bothers them most. You know how often you find the crab living happily in the pearl-shell because when the oyster feeds he gets his share, and he is too active for the oyster to kill as it does the worm, by spitting its nacre on him and entombing him. Some day divers in improved suits will search for the thousands of pearls that have fallen upon the bottom from dead oysters, and maybe make millions. *Mais, après tout,* pearls may soon have little value, for they say that the Japanese and other people are growing them like mushrooms, and, though they have not yet perfected the orient or true pearl, they may some day. One man, some kind of foreigner, who used to be around here, discovered the secret, but it 's lost now."

CHAPTER XIII

Story of the wondrous pearls planted in the lagoon of Pukapuka—Tepeva a Tepeva, the crippled diver, tells it—How a European scientist improved on nature—Tragedy of Patasy and Mauraii—The robbed coral bank—Death under the sea.

IN Mapuhi's store, on the counter, taken from the cabin of the *County of Roxburgh,* lay twenty-five pearls. They were of different values, two or three magnificent in size, in shape, and in luster, the fruit of Mapuhi's tribe's harvest in Takaroa Lagoon. He displayed them to me and others the night before I was to sail with Lying Bill for the Marquesas Islands. Aaron Mandel was about to buy them, and as the Parisian dealer and Mapuhi discussed their worth, Bill, McHenry, Kopcke, Nimau, and others added their opinions.

"If you paid for these pearls what they cost in suffering, and in proportion to the earnings of a diver in his lifetime, you would offer me ten times what you do," said Mapuhi. "The white women who wear these *poe* can never know the dangers or the pain endured by our people. Two have *aninia,* vertigo, and one has been made permanently deaf this *rahui.*"

"I agree with you," replied Mandel, "that nothing of money can balance what you Paumotuans go through to gather shells, but in many parts of the world divers of other races are doing the same. They don't go as deep as you do, because their waters are shallower, but

they fix the price for pearls. I have seen them from Ceylon to Australia, and I have to meet their competition when I take these pearls to Paris where the market is. Also, Mapuhi, the culture pearl is every year hurting our trade more and more, and some day may make pearls so cheap that you will get a third of what you do now. You remember the Taote of *Pukapuka!*"

"That was the devil's magic, and it will not be again," said Mapuhi. "Man who loves and serves the true God will never interfere with his secrets, but will accept what he offers for man's struggles and torments. The Taote was tempted by Satan, and his sin was terribly punished."

Mandel smiled.

"Yes the Taote got a rough deal," he admitted. "But his pearls made another man's fortune, and astonished all who saw them in Paris. Let me tell you! Last year I visited three culture fields, and they are doing wonderful things. The Japanese for many years only copied the methods of the Chinese. They forced the fresh water mussel and the abalone to coat with nacre substances they inserted within their folds, but they got no pearls of the best size, shape, or luster. Now, Kokichi Mikimoto has gone much further than anybody. I spent a week with him at his pearl farm in the bay of Ago in the Inland Sea of Japan. The bay is a dozen miles long and five wide, with an average depth of sixty feet, but it is remarkably free from currents and severe storms. Mikimoto is a scientist as was the *Taote*. He opens a three-year-old shell and lays a bead of nacre on the outer, shell-secreting skin of the

oyster. This skin is then dissected off the oyster and fitted about the bead like a sac. This sac is then transplanted into the tissues of another oyster in its shell, an astringent is sprinkled on the wound, and the second oyster is planted in the prepared bed at anywhere from twenty-five to eighty feet. It stays there from three to seven years, and then his girl diver brings it up. Mind you, he has laid down suitable rocks in certain shallow places, and when they are covered with oyster spat they are removed to deeper beds and set out in order. It is these which are dissected at three years of age, and the nuclei inserted in them. These beads are of all colors, mother-of-pearl or pink or blue coral, and the pearls are of the color, white or pink or blue, of the beads. The oysters often spit them out, the starfish and octopus ravage the beds, and the red current sometimes spoils everything for a year. They have similar farms in other parts of Japan, and in Australia and Ceylon, but Mikimoto has done most. He sells millions of pearls every year. Of course they are blisters and so not orient or perfect, because the bead has touched the shell while growing, and has not remained in the folds of the oyster. But I am afraid, for I was told a few months ago that Mikimoto and others were making perfect pearls. If they do they will ruin the market."

"You can tell the difference between natural and culture pearls in any case?" I asked.

"Mais oui! If you cut open the grafted pearl you find the center a bead or bit of coral, but in the true pearl the center is a grain of sand, or a hollow formerly occupied by the tapeworm or parasite. Well, you

won't make any money cutting pearls open, so we use the ultra-violet ray. Most of Mikimoto's pearls are about as big as French peas, and, as I say, lack sphericity because of attachment to the inner shells. But, mind you, his oysters are merely the avicule or wing-shelled kind, and small. Here are these Paumotu shells from six to eighteen inches across and the oysters in proportion. Think of what they might do, if they were put to work by science and—"

"They were once," broke in Kopcke. "My girl's father knows all about it."

"I know much about it, too," said Mandel; "and I have never known just what to believe. I only know that some one sold a string of pearls in Paris finer than any in the world, and they are now in New York.

"The Empress Eugénie's necklace came from here, and so did Queen Victoria's five-thousand-pound pearl, but these were said to be finer."

"For heaven's sake!" I exclaimed. "Tell me what you do know of this mysterious *Taote* and his tragedy. Mapuhi has put the devil to work in it. I have been hearing talk about it since I landed in Tahiti."

"Come down to my shack," said Kopcke, "and I will get old Tepeva a Tepeva to tell you his part of it."

"I will finish with Mapuhi," Mandel said, "and will be along in ten minutes."

That the fixing of a price for the twenty-five pearls was not to be concluded in public was evident, and so Kopcke, Lying Bill, and we others sauntered to Kopcke's hut. Nowhere do whites despise one another as feelingly as in the South Seas. Their competition in business and in love is so intimate and so acute

that there are no distances nor withholdings of emotion. The finesse and impersonal euchering of rivals practised on mainlands is not copied in this hotter and more primitive mart where adversaries are of ruder breed, and courtesy is considered weakness. As we strolled under the palms to Kopcke's house, McHenry said to me, "This *Taote,* this doctor or magician they gab about, I knew better than anybody else, an' he was a bloomin' queer 'un. I kept a store at Penrhyn for years, and this fellow was around there studyin' the lagoon. Everybody called him Doc, but whether he was a M. D. I don't know. He had a tool-chest, though, like a bloody sawbones, and could fix a cut or saw off an arm fine. He had michaelscropes and all sorts o' professor junk, an' he was good-hearted, and had money enough, too."

"I remember the fellow well," Lying Bill interposed. " 'E was a han'some man, big as Landers, and dark as Llewellyn. 'E 'ad gold 'air, but never wore a 'at, blow 'igh, blow low, an' so 'is 'air was so bleedin' sunburned, it was all colors. 'E was a furriner, an' 'ad studied in Germany,—if 'e was n't a German,—though 'e was a reg'ler pollyglut and parlayed every lingo. 'E 'ad a 'ole chemist shop with 'im on Penrhyn. I used to see 'im treatin' the lepers and studyin' oysters night an' day. At first, I thought he might be a buyer, an' watched 'im, but he 'ad no time for tradin'. In the divin' season 'e was always around the lagoons, an' 'e 'd look at every pearl and the shell it come out of. 'E was a myst'ry, 'e was, an' made no friends with anybody. The natives called 'im *Itataupoo Taote,* 'Atless Doctor. 'E played a deep game, 'e did."

At Kopcke's shack he made us welcome. Lamps were lighted, and cigarettes and a black bottle of rum set on the counter.

"I 'll go and hunt up the old man to spin you the yarn," said Kopcke, and disappeared in the darkness of the outside. Mandel came before he returned, and as the talk was still on the *Taote* he gathered up his thread of it.

"This magician's name was Horace Sassoon, and he was of a rich and fine family in England," said Mandel. "I knew much about him because I cashed his drafts more than once. He was a medical doctor, educated in Germany, France, and England, and he had been seven or eight years in India. While in Ceylon or the Arabian Gulf he investigated the pearl fisheries and got interested in the processes of mother-of-pearl secretion by oysters. I think he was a real savant, and that he had a strong interest in the treatment of lepers by the chaulmoogra oil and the X-ray. He told me that he wanted to endow a great institution in India, but that he was unable to raise the funds. Me, I am credulous, but I believe the institution was a beautiful woman who spent much money. He had an income sent from Paris to Tahiti, and the drafts, not large, came through my house. I would meet him, as you men did, in Papeete or in these atolls, or Penrhyn, wherever there was diving, but I never suspected his game, though three or four times he said to me, 'I will have all the money I need some day if I am right in my theories.' I lost track of him, and did not associate with him the big pearls that came to Paris until I saw the pearl Woronick bought, and heard Tepeva a Tepeva's account. I won't spoil

it by repeating it, and anyhow, here he is himself!"

Kopcke entered with his girl and her father. The latter was a very big man, the wreck of a giant. He was sadly afflicted; he would take a step, and stop, and then his head would roll over on his shoulder. Each time he started to move, he went through convulsive tremors as if winding himself up for the next step—and I recognized the paralysis which seizes the diver who has dived too often and too deep.

"Maite rii, Tamahine! Go slow, daughter!" he was saying, as he seized a post and let himself down to the floor, where he squatted.

"He was about the best diver in the group, but the bends have got him," said Kopcke.

" 'E 's a Mormon," Lying Bill blurted, "an' 'e won't touch the rum." Bill helped himself, stood the bottle before him, and began to doze.

"My father," said Kopcke, "here is a *Marite* from far across the sea, who wants to know of your adventure with the *Taote* who gave you the pearl."

Tepeva a Tepeva shaded his eyes with his hand and peered at me. *"Oia ia!* It is well!" he stuttered. His eyes fell upon the bottle, and remained fastened upon it.

"Would not Tepeva a Tepeva wish to refresh himself?" I said quietly, and passed the bottle to the cripple. He took it, weighed it, removed the cork, smelt the contents, and poured out a shellful,—a third of a pint, —tossed it off, smacked his lips as if it were cocoanut milk, and began to speak more freely.

"Ea, that *ramu* is good. I do not drink it as a Mormon but because I am weak. It is *makivi,* this thing I

tell you. It is stranger than the stick of Moses turning into a sea-snake. It costs me dear, as you see, though it paid me well. I am as I am, a cracked canoe, because of it. But I have my house, and all the debts of my family are paid, and I owe Mapuhi a Mapuhi not a *sou*. It is good to be free. I was a diver at Penrhyn for the British when I met the foreigner. He was a *Taote*. He said that he was trying to cure the lepers. He had a wonderful medicine. He did not let them drink it, but put it into their arms through a pipe. But also he watched the diving. Doc, they called him, and he never covered his head. But no man said *Ita-taupoo* to him. He was no man to laugh at. He spat his words and was done, but he would mend a broken bone, or cure a coral cut or the wound of a swordfish. He looked through a tube with a glass in it at blood from the lepers, and at pearls and oysters. He had lamps that made a light like the blue sky. Through his tube the water from our wells was as a fish-pond. Hours and hours he watched the shells being opened, and every pearl he must see, and the shell from which it came. I thought he searched for a pearl to charm the leprosy. All through the *rahui* he stayed in Penrhyn. He went to Tahiti on the *Pani*. I was on the *Pani*, and much we talked about oysters and the different lagoons.

"I came to Takaroa, my home. Months afterward the *Taote* arrived here in a ten-ton cutter. He had but one sailor, a Tahitian, Terii. They lived in that house over there. I would not go into that house now for ten tons of shell. It is *ihoiho*. When the moon is dark a spirit dances there, the spirit of Mauraii.

Photo from L. Gauthier

Ghost girl

A double canoe

He was my cousin, and the *Taote* hired him to help the other man. One day the *Taote* began to buy provisions, a great quantity which were stored in the cutter with other big boxes, as if for a long voyage. They sailed away, Terii and Mauraii, too. 'Nuku-Hiva will see me next,' said the *Taote* to us all. That was a lie, but I did not know it then. They went to Pukapuka. It is a little atoll, toward the Marquesas, and far from any other island. Mauraii had dived there, and the *Taote* knew that. Five moons later the cutter sailed into this lagoon. Mauraii was with the *Taote,* but Terii was not. The *Taote* paid Mauraii, and left in the cutter with another sailor. For two years Mauraii lived without labor. For two years his jaws remained tight as the jaws of the *pahua.* He spoke well of the *Taote,* but he was afraid. When I asked him more about Terii, he would not talk. Terii had eaten poisonous fish, he said once. He had trodden on the *nohu,* he said another time. I knew Mauraii had not been to the Marquesas. He was a Mormon, Mauraii, and he prayed like a man with a secret.

"We forget soon, and it was four years when Patasy came in the *Potii Taaha,* his own cutter. He was of Irélani, and drank much *ramu.* The cutter was leaky, and Mauraii worked to calk the seams. Patasy gave him hardly any money, but food, and night rum. Mauraii, with rum in him, would now make many words to Patasy, and to me. He spoke of a secret that lay between him and the *Taote.* He spoke of an oath he had sworn on the book of Mormon and the picture of Birigahama Younga. He spoke of something at Pukapuka that was growing bigger and bigger. The

Taote was in his native land, and would return soon, and they would both be very rich. Mauraii's talk was like a cloudy day that does not let one see far. Sometimes I would ask him about Terii, who had gone with Mauraii, and who had not come back. That would still his big word-making. He would shake a little then, all over. He would say: 'I must not talk, Tepeva a Tepeva; I must not talk.' But with more rum he would talk. He was worried, though. He stopped going to the temple; he lived on Patasy's cutter. Often I saw him lying on the deck, full of drink.

"One night he came to my house late. His heart was very heavy. He had been drinking with Patasy, and he had done something wrong. He cursed Patasy. He said that Patasy had forced him to do evil—that he, Mauraii, had taken an oath, and that now, this night, he had broken it. It would bring him harm. The *Taote* was coming back soon. Mauraii shook when he said that, shook just as he did when I would ask him what had become of the companion who had gone with him to Pukapuka and had never come back.

"*E mea au!* I am not the man to search the heart of a brother for what should be hidden. But having broken his oath and told his secret to Patasy, I thought it right he should tell it to me. But he would say no more. And he sailed away alone with Patasy.

"For many weeks we heard nothing more of Mauraii. Then from sailors who came from Tahiti we heard that he and Patasy had returned to Papeete in a month. Then we heard that Patasy had sold his cutter and had taken steamship away to his own country. He never came back.

"Mauraii stayed in Papeete. Every little while we heard about him. He had much money, and he was drinking all day in the Paris rum store, and dancing the nights with the Tahiti Magadalenas in the Cocoanut House.

"When Mauraii had spent all his money the French Government brought him back to Takaroa, and he was mad. Something had broken in his belly, where the thinking-parts are. He would sit all day, looking at the lagoon and saying nothing. Never did he say anything. Sometimes he would shake all over. And all the time his back was bent as if some one was coming from behind to strike him.

"It was a long time after this that the *Taote* returned, on the *Moana.* He came first to my house. He asked me where Mauraii was, and I told him Mauraii was here, but was *maamaa,* that he was possessed of the demon. He asked me if it was a talking demon, if it made Mauraii say everything there was in his head. I told him it was the other way. The poor man said nothing, but sat by the lagoon all day, and was fed and cared for by the women.

" 'Let us go to see Mauraii!' he said. He was angry, and I was afraid, and I went with him. I knew where Mauraii would be, and I pointed him out. He was sitting in the shade of a *purau* tree, looking at the lagoon. The *Taote* went to him and spoke to him. Mauraii fell flat, and then he crawled about the sand, and shouted to me not to let the *Taote* kill him, *too.* This made him more angry, and he said that Mauraii was really *maamaa,* and that nothing could be done for him. Mauraii ran to his house when he had turned

his back. After the *Moana* had gone on her way to Nuku-Hiva, the *Taote* asked me if I could go with him to another island. I did not want to go. If I had not gone, I would not be as I am, but then I would not have my house, and all the debts paid of my family.

"I said that I had work here. But he said he would be gone but a couple of weeks, and that he would give me ten *taras* a day, and that I would have no hard work. Mapuhi and Nohea were absent. No white elders were here to advise me. Finally I said I would go, though when I looked at Mauraii and saw what he was, I was afraid. He said we must take Mauraii with us. We had hard work to get Mauraii on the cutter. When we did, which was at night, we put him in the hold and closed the hatch and sailed out of the pass. It was my own cutter, but the *Taote* had provided food, and his big boxes were in the hold with Mauraii.

"Once outside the reef, the *Taote* said he would go almost due east, and that Pukapuka was our island. I said that Pukapuka had no people on it, and he said that was true. I said that Pukapuka was closed to the diving, and he said that was true. But we went on toward Pukapuka. When we slid the cover off the hatch to the hold, Mauraii came up, and when he saw we were at sea and that the *Taote* was so near him, he shivered like a diver who has had a struggle with a shark. I thought he would leap into the water, and often he looked at it with longing. But the *Taote* talked to him strongly, and put medicine in his arm.

"We steered and trimmed sail by turn. The wind was fair, and we reached Pukapuka in five days. We had a hard time to get the boxes ashore. There is no

pass, and you cannot reach the lagoon from the sea. We had brought a small boat lashed on the deck, and this we carried to the lagoon. It took us a day to move it, and we made Mauraii help. The man had changed since we landed on Pukapuka. He was not wild, but *taata ravea paari.* He was cunning. He smiled to himself sometimes in an evil way. We were no sooner on the lagoon than the *Taote* ordered me and that madman to build a hut and to rest ourselves for a day.

"Pukapuka had not a man upon it. It is like a cocoanut-shell, round all about, and the lagoon deep, and full of yellow shell with yellow pearls. There are no poison fish in the water, as in some other islands. I thought of that, and of the man who had been here with Mauraii and had never come back. I was afraid. The *Taote* could make Mauraii sleep and sleep with one touch of a silver pipe on his arm. I was afraid.

"The island is loved by the birds; it was their time for nesting, and the air was filled with them. That was the only sound. The *Taote* wore no hat, though the sun upon the coral was as stones heated to cook fish. When we had rested a day, the *Taote,* who had been most of the hours upon the lagoon, spoke to me of our mission, and we three rowed a little distance until I judged we were in water of seventeen fathoms.

" 'It is long,' said the *Taote.* 'It is five years since I was here, but I am sure of the spot. There was a cocoanut-tree that hid the village if I rowed from that rock we put there on shore, due west, five *umi.* There is the cocoanut, and it hides the huts the divers live in when the lagoon is open.'

"You see how quiet this lagoon is? Well, that lagoon of Pukapuka was ten times more still. It made me shake as had Mauraii. But now he did not shake. He was all brightness, and his eyes were shining, though he said not a word.

"The *Taote* took the *titea mata* and looked into the water. He could see little; his eyes were not strong. I went into the water, took the *titea mata,* stuck my head into it and gazed down into the sea.

" 'Do you see shell, large shell?' he asked quickly, like a man who knows what is in a place.

" 'I see shell,' I said.

" 'Then dive and bring it up,' he commanded.

"I said the prayer to Adam and to Birigahama Younga. I breathed long, and I went down. There was in my heart a fear of something strange. The bottom was at seventeen fathoms, a jungle of coral as big as the trees in Tahiti, with black caves and large flowers and sponges, and also many of the *pahua,* the great shell which closes like a trap and can drown a man. Dropping straightaway, I swam upon a ledge raised above the floor of the lagoon. There was a pair of shells, very large. But where there had been many, only this single pair remained. I moved along the ledge, and found that scores had been ripped from the same bed. A diver sees easily where shells have been.

" 'Robbed!' I said to myself. 'There has been a thief here.' Pukapuka had been closed to diving for six years, and it was forbidden to remove a shell. I swam over the face of the ledge, and was sure I had the sole remaining pair of this bed. I rose to the surface with them.

The *Taote* was hanging over the boat with his head in the *titea mata,* watching me as I came up. As I hung on the boat to breathe, I saw Mauraii regarding him with a hateful eye, and I shook my fist at the fool. The foreigner took the shell quickly, and opened it, pulled the oyster out into a bowl, and searched it. Then with a little cry he held up a pearl, a *poe matauiui,* big and like a ball, as shiny as an eye. Bigger it was than any pearl I have ever seen. It was perfect in shape, and with a skin like the gleam of the sun on the lagoon. What Mauraii had said of the *Taote* growing things to make him rich came to my mind, as I saw this wonder-pearl shining in the *Taote's* hand. The foreigner for a moment was as mad as Mauraii, and, taking hold of that man's hand, shook it and shook it.

" 'Ah, Mauraii,' he shouted, 'now we are paid for those weeks of hell here! You shall have enough to eat and drink always.'

"He laughed and clapped Mauraii on the shoulder, and the *maamaa* laughed foolishly, and began to dance in the boat. We had to pull him down, or he would have overturned it.

" 'There are more than a hundred pearls like that,' said the *Taote.* 'I am richer than King Mapuhi, ten times as rich, and I can make all I want. I made it. I worked and worked to find out, and Mauraii put the things in the shell. I am a *te Tumu!*'

"I did not like that. *Te Tumu* is the creator. It is wrong to boast like that. And where was Terii, who had gone with Mauraii from Takaroa to Pukapuka? He would share in no wealth. And the madman beside me—what happiness left for him?

"'*I teienei,*' said the *Taote,* as he rubbed the pearl. 'Go down and bring up as many as you can. When we did the sowing, I worked in a diver's dress. I have that machine in those boxes on the cutter. Maybe we should get it, for we will want more seed.'

"'There are no more shells in that bed,' I said. 'This was the only one there.'

"'No more shells there!' he screamed. 'You are mad like this fellow. We found a hundred and seven there, and we planted seed in each one. Each of them has a pearl as fine as this.'

"He tried to be gentle again, though he sweated. He tried to explain. He had discovered the secret of the pearl; he had planted something in each shell as one might a cocoanut-sprout in the earth. There was much I did not understand, for no man had ever tried such blasphemy. The God that made these lagoons had wrapped them in the unknown, and had made pearls the dispensation of His will.

"'Whatever was done here by you,' I said, 'there are no more shells in that *tiamaha.* I searched it all about.'

"He tried to laugh, but failed, and he looked at Mauraii.

"'A hundred and seven shells! It took us weeks,' he said. 'That was the number, Mauraii?'

"The man possessed of the devil nodded his head and really laughed. It was an evil laugh.

"'A hundred and seven, and one—this one—makes a hundred and six,' said he. He smiled, and I went cold. I knew that before he went mad, Mauraii did not know how to count. The devil was in him.

"The *Taote* breathed hard. 'Tepeva a Tepeva,' he

said, 'go down again. It is possible that this is not the bed. We placed a small anchor beside it. Look for that. I worked seventeen years for this day.'

"Again I went into the water, and to the bottom. I found the place where I had pried off the oyster with the great pearl. Digging in the sand and ooze, I found the anchor. I saw plainly the empty cups of the oysters that had been, and I counted them roughly and made them about a hundred. I stayed a full minute and a half, and I hated to go up. I did not like to meet that wise man looking at me in a terrible way when he should see me empty-handed. But I had to go. I was exhausted when I reached the sunlight, and until I had gained my breath and my blood was quiet, I did not turn to the *Taote*.

" 'No more shell?' he said quietly. 'You are lying! You are lying! You are trying to cheat me. Look out! Look out! Ask Mauraii what I did to—but the shell are there. I can see them with the glass. Come, we will get the diving-machine.'

"He cursed me, and said I was trying to steal his wealth. What he saw through the *titea mata* was the gleam of the *pahua,* the great shell the priests use for holy water. I said no more, and with Mauraii went to the beach. It was night when we had brought the machine to the boat, and we returned to the cutter for food. I shall not forget that night. The foreigner could not sleep, and he talked to me. He talked as if he had a fever. He said he had tried for years to find out what made pearls in oysters, and to do the work of God. While others had made small ones that clung to the shell, he alone had found the way to put in the shells

large beginnings for the oysters to cover. He had chosen Pukapuka because it had a lagoon without a pass, and so free from currents, and because it was closed to diving and no one lived there. No one knew of it, he said—no one but himself and Mauraii.

"I thought of Patasy, of the 'Potii Taaha.' Of what Mauraii had told me when in rum. Of his going away with Patasy and coming back to Tahiti, there to drink and dance in the Cocoanut House.

"But I said nothing, for I was afraid. Mauraii had slept ashore. In the morning we found him praying and singing by the lagoon. We went out in the boat, and set up the diving-machine, and the *Taote* told me to put on the dress.

" 'I and Mauraii will work the pump,' he said. 'You stay down ten minutes at least, and search the bottom all about there. Maybe we were mistaken in the exact spot.' He spoke like a good friend, now.

"I had said nothing about the anchor, because I was afraid. I sank down to the bottom, and first looked that the air came freely and that I was not entangled. Then I walked about and saw that a diver had been there. The whole bank had been gathered. The one shell had escaped merely because the thief had so willed it. I sat down and waited for the ten minutes to go, and I wished I was in Takaroa. Pukapuka Lagoon had many sharks. In the years that had passed since the last diving season they had grown big. When I was still, they came by me, and through the glasses I saw their ugly faces staring at me. I frightened them away with the air from my wrist, or I clapped my hands in a diver's way. I had my back to the rock bank.

At last a signal came on the rope, and I had to let them pull me up."

Tepeva a Tepeva's voice was weak. He poured himself the last drink of rum. Kopcke had gone to attend to the loading and Lying Bill was snoring on the floor.

"Slowly they lifted me, but it seemed to me like a second.

"What look the *Taote* had, I do not know. I did not turn to him until my helmet was unscrewed, and I had taken off the coat. Without meeting his eyes, I said, 'No shells.'

" 'No shells! My God!' he said. 'Are you blind? Did you not the first time bring up this? Mauraii knows well there are a hundred and six more. Is not that true, Mauraii?' he said, coaxingly.

"The madman laughed. 'A hundred and six more,' he replied; 'and to hell with Patasy.'

"This moment the eyes of the *Taote* met me. He was shivering, as Mauraii had shivered when he left Takaroa.

" 'Give me the helmet!' he ordered. 'Help me put it on. I will know. I will know!'

"He put the pearl in a purse, and the purse in a pocket of the diving-coat. A knife was in his belt. I fastened the coat and the belt and tied the strings at the wrist. I put the lead weights on his breast and back, and lowered him into the water. Before I screwed the helmet tight, I said to him: 'Go slowly! Walk carefully! Don't bend too low!'

"Mauraii fed the pump as I let out the line, and when I felt the weight of the line, I took the pump myself.

Now, a man like me, who has dived with the machine for years, knows every motion of the line.

The *Taote* was not moving slowly and cautiously. He stopped, and for five minutes there was little motion.

"Aueo!" I thought. He has found the robbed bank, and the anchor. He knows the truth. He will come up now. What will I do? He will be terrible.

"Suddenly I felt a drag at the rope, swift and hard; not the steady pull of walking.

"He has fallen, tripped and fallen, and cannot get up! That was my thought.

" 'Mauraii,' I said, 'you man the pump alone. Go smoothly! If you fail, I will kill you!'

"I leaped in, and swam straight down. The foreigner was on the bottom, lying on his face. I raised his body, light as a shell in that depth. There was a great rip in the front of the coat. The air rushed from it, but there was no motion of his body. The knife in his hand had been used to destroy himself. He had seen the work of the thief and had cut open the coat. The devil of despair had done that with him.

"A diver thinks quickly. I could not bring him to the top unless Mauraii aided. I signaled by the rope. There was no reply. The air was not being pumped. It had stopped as I lifted him. Mauraii had left his duty. I had one chance. I might unscrew the heavy helmet, and cut the leads and carry him, with the aid of the line, to the surface. He might not be dead yet. I seized the helmet, cut the hose, and began to turn the metal helmet. As I did so, I saw a shadow over my head, and laid hold of my knife. It was not a shark. It was Mauraii. He was dancing and smiling, dancing

and smiling, as in the Cocoanut House in Papeete. He slowly settled down in the water. He took hold of me as I twisted at the helmet, and he smiled at me, and danced on a ledge of coral. Below this, I saw one of those giant *pahua*. *Aue! Marite!* This pair was as long as I am, and as deep as my legs. The great animal in it had opened his doors to eat, and as Mauraii leaped about in his mad dancing from rock to rock, he stepped into the jaws of the *pahua*. *Aue!* They closed as the jaws of the turtle upon the fish, and held the fool as if he was buried. He was fast to the knees, and fell over upon me as I worked at the helmet, his head hanging down by my feet.

"My lungs were bursting, my heart beating my breast. I had been more than three minutes a hundred feet below the air. I had been using my strength. I pushed the fool away. Suddenly I felt my leg seized, and the grip of teeth upon my flesh. I sprang up, pulling at the rope to give me force, and calling on Adam for help.

"Minutes it was before I could crawl into the boat. I lay there many minutes before I could stand up. The blood was upon my leg, and the marks of teeth. They were not the teeth of a fish, but of a man. I prayed for guidance. The *Taote* was dead, and Mauraii, too. What could I do for them? Nothing! Yet I heard a whisper in my ear to go down. I slipped into the water and swam to the bottom. I never touched the sand. I saw the bodies of the *Taote* and Mauraii fought over by a dozen sharks. I had prayed, and I had a knife in my hand. Even a shark fears a bold man. I struck at them right and left and reached the ledge where the *Taote* lay. I slashed at the coat and cut

away the pocket. The water was red with blood about me, but I shot up past the sharks with the purse, and reached the boat. I took the oars and rowed as fast as I could to shore. There I knelt and thanked Adam and Ietu Kirito for my life.

"I ran across the reef and swam to the cutter. I cut away the anchor and raised the sail and left the abode of the demon. Fakaina I reached in two days; and, with a Takaroa man who was there, I put the cutter about and sailed for home.

"What does the Book say? In the midst of life we are in death. I had stayed under too long in the lagoon of Pukapuka. Like a thunderbolt came on me the diver's sickness—and I am as I am."

Lying Bill had been awake for several minutes.

"You did mighty well," he commented. "You saved the pearl and the Doc's money for yourself. There 's three men et up by sharks. You sold the pearl to Woronick for twenty-five thousand francs. . . . And by the bloody star of Mars, you 've drunk all the rum while I 've been asleep! Come on, O'Brien! Let 's get the bloomin' 'ell out of 'ere to the schooner! We 've got to sail at sun-up for the Marquesas."

Tepeva a Tepeva, the man stricken by the bends, was still squatting on the floor immersed in his pregnant memories when I shook his hand, and went to bid goodby to my friends of the atolls where life is harder but simpler and sweeter than elsewhere in the world. Mapuhi and Nohea rubbed my back, and commended me to God. The wind was fluttering wildly the fronds of the cocoanut-trees, and the surf was heavy as we rowed through the passage and moat and struck the

breakers on the outer reef. From the sea for a few minutes the lanterns in the houses were like fireflies in the cane, but soon the darkness hid them, and I saw only the black shadow of the *motus,* and the gleam of the foaming crests of the waves in the faint starlight. I lay down on a mat by the steering-wheel of the *Fetia Taiao,* and dreamed of the *Taote* and the dancing Maurai in the trap of the giant *pahua.*

I awoke with the cries of the sailors raising the mainsail, and the motion of the vessel through the water. We were off with a fair wind for the Land of the War Fleet.

CHAPTER XIV

The palace of the governor of the Marquesas in the vale of Atuona—Monsieur L'Hermier des Plantes, Ghost Girl, Miss Tail, and Song of the Nightingale—*Tapus* in the South Seas—Strange conventions that regulate life—A South Seas Pankhurst—How women won their freedom.

THE palace of the governor was within half a mile of my abode in the vale of Atuona, on the island of Hiva-Oa, the capital of the Marquesan Archipelago. It was a broad and deep valley, "the most beautiful, and by far the most ominous and gloomy, spot on earth," said Stevenson. Umbrageous and silent, it was watered by a stream, which, born in the distant hills, descended in falls and rills and finally a chattering brook to the bay. Magnificent forests of many kinds of trees, a hundred vines and flowers, with rarest orchids, and a tangled mass of grasses and creepers, lined the banks of the little river, and filled the rising confines of the dell, which, as it climbed, grew narrower and darker, and more melancholy of aspect, the poignant melancholy of a sad loveliness past telling or analyzing. A huge fortress of rocks rose almost sheer above my cottage, lowering in shadow and terrible in storm, the highest point in the Marquesas. In sunshine it was the brilliant rampart of the world-god's battlement, reflecting his flashing rays, and throwing a sheen of luminosity upon the depths of the strath. This lofty peak of Temetiu, nearly a mile in the sky, was the tower of a vast structure of broken hills, gigantic columns, pinnacles,

From the painting by Oscar F. Schmidt

A young palm in Atuona

From the painting by Oscar F. Schmidt

Atuona valley and the peak of Temetiu

tilted and vertical rocks, ruins of titanic battles of fire and water in ages gone. I had but to lift my eyes and lower them to know that man here as in the Paumotus had but triflingly affected his environment. From the castellated summits to the beach where I had landed, the dwellings of humans seemed lost in the dense foliage dominated by the lofty cocoanuts and the spreading breadfruits.

The palace of the young French administrator was in a garden in which grew exotic flowers brought by predecessors who sought to assuage their nostalgia by familiar charms. The palace had large verandas, and they were most of it, as in all tropical countries where mosquitoes are not too menacing. The reading and lounging, the eating and drinking, took place there, and generally a delicious breeze cooled the humid air and drove away any insects that might annoy. Almost daily I was the guest of the governor at a meal, or in the evening after dinner, for a merry hour or two. We might be alone, or with André Bauda, the tax collector, postmaster, and chief of police, or not seldom with one or more of the fairest of the Marquesan girls of the island of Hiva-Oa. For the governor was host not only to the beauties of our valley of Atuona, but sent Flag, the native *mutoi,* or policeman, of the capital, to other villages over the mountains, to invite those whom Flag thought would lessen his *ennui.* Far from his beloved Midi, the governor retained a Gallic and gallant attitude toward young women, and never tired of their prattle, their insatiable thirst for the beverages of France, and their light laughter when lifted out of their habitual gravity by these. Determined to learn their tongue as quickly

as possible, being no longer resident than I in the Marquesas, he kept about him a lively lexicon or two to furnish him words and practice. Midnight often came with the rest of the village already hours upon their sleeping-mats, but on the palace porches a gabble of conversation, the lilt of a chant, or perhaps the patter of a hula dance of bare feet upon the boards. The Protestant and Catholic missionaries, though opposed to each other upon doctrinal and disciplinary subjects, united in condemnation of the conduct of the high representative of sovereignty. But, like the governor of the Paumotus, he replied: *"La vie est triste; vive la bagatalle."* Life is sad; let joy be unconfined.

The governor's *ménage* had only one attendant, Song of the Nightingale, and he served only because he was a prisoner, and preferred the domestic duties to repairing trails or sitting all day in the calaboose by the beach. There was no servant in the Marquesas. Whatever civilization had done to them,—and it had undone them almost entirely,—it had not made them menials. There was never a slave. Here death was preferable. In Tahiti one might procure native domestics with extreme difficulty through their momentary craving for gauds, or through affection, but one bought no subservience. The silent, painstaking European or American or Asiatic, the humble, sir-ring butler and footman, could not be matched in the South Seas. If they liked one, these indolent people would work for one now and then, but must be allowed to have their own way and say, and, if reproved, it must be in the tone one used to a child or a relative. The governor himself was compelled to endure Song of the Nightingale's lapses and familiarities,

because he was the only procurable cook in the islands. He could not buy or persuade one of his lovely guests, clothed as they were but in a single garment, to wash a plate or shake a mat. I, it was true, was assisted by Exploding Eggs, a boy of fourteen years, but I made him an honored companion and neophyte whom I initiated into the mysteries of coffee-making and sweeping, and he, too, often wandered away for a day or two without warning.

The table was spread on the veranda when at seven o'clock I opened the garden gate of the palace. Flag had delivered to me an enveloped card with studious ceremony, the governor sometimes observing the extreme niceties of official hospitality, and again throwing them to the winds, especially in very hot weather. Flag, barelegged and barefooted as always, wore the red-striped jacket of the *mutoi* and a loin-cloth, and carried a capacious leather pouch from which he had extracted the made-in-Paris *carte d'invitation.* To him it was a mysterious summons to a Lucullan feast which he might not even look upon. The governor was dressing when I mounted the porch, and I was received by Song of the Nightingale. He was a middle-aged desperado, with a leering face, given a Mephistophelian cast by a black whisker extending from ear to ear, and by heavy lines of blue tattooing upon his forehead. He had white blood in him, I felt sure, for he had a cunning wickedness of aspect that lacked the simplicity of the Marquesan. He had been a prisoner many years for various offenses, but mostly for theft or moonshining, at which he was adept, and he was the one Marquesan I would not trust; he had been too much with whites. One won-

dered at times whether one's life was not the pawn of a mood of such a villain, but the French had hammered their dominion upon these sons of man-eaters with lead and steel in the early days, though they were easy and negligent rulers over the feeble remnant.

The handsome governor came from his boudoir as Vehine-hae and Tahia-veo said *"Kaoha!"* Vehine-hae and Tahia-veo were their names in Marquesan, which translated exactly Ghost Girl and Miss Tail. The latter was a *petite,* engaging girl of seventeen, a brunette in color, and modest and sweet in disposition. Ghost Girl was the enigma of her sex there, nineteen or twenty, living alone in a detached hut, and singularly beautiful. She was as dark as a Nubian, with a voluptuous figure, small hands and feet, and baggage eyes of melting sepia that promised devotion unutterable. Her nose was straight and perfect, and her sensual mouth filled with shining teeth. Of all the Marquesan girls she wore a travesty of European dress. They in public wore a tight-fitting *peignoir* or tunic, and in private a *pareu,* but Ghost Girl had on a silk bodice open to disclose her ripe symmetry, and a lace petticoat about which she wore a silk kerchief. In her ebon heap of hair she wore the phosphorescent flowers of the Rat's Ear. Her mind was that of a child of ten, inquisitive and acquisitive, exhibitive and demanding.

The governor seated us, the ladies opposite each other, and the dinner began with appetizers of vermouth. The aromatic wine, highly fortified as it was, burned the throat of Miss Tail, but Ghost Girl drank hers with zest, and said, *"Motaki!* That's fine!" Neither of the girls spoke more than a few sentences of French, though

they had both been in the nuns' school, but we were able with our knowledge of Marquesan and Song's fragmentary French to carry on a lively interchange of words, if not of thought.

The governor had shot a few brace of *kuku,* the green doves of the forest, and Song had spitted them over a *purau* wood fire. With the haunch of a wild goat from the hills we had excellent fare, with claret and white wine from Sauterne. We two palefaces wielded forks, but as no Polynesians use such very modern inventions the ladies lifted their meat to their mouths without artificial aid. Ghost Girl, as befitting her European attire, tried to use a fork, but shrieked with pain when she succeeded in putting only the tines into her tongue. We hardly realize the pains our mothers were at to teach us table-manners, nor that gentlemen of Europe ate with their fingers at a period when chop-sticks were in common use in China and Japan, except in time of mourning.

Song of the Nightingale, who, doubtless, had indulged his convict hankering for alcohol in the secret recesses of the kitchen, laughed loudly at Ghost Girl's pain, and when he placed a platter of the *kuku* on the cloth, and she refused to accept one of the grilled birds his snigger became derisive. He took up the carving-fork and stuck it deep into a *kuku's* breast and put it on her plate. She shuddered and started back, with her hands covering her long-lashed eyes. The governor demanded in a slightly angry tone to know what Song had done to frighten her. The cook explained that Ghost Girl was of Hanavave, on the island of Fatuhiva, a day's journey distant, and that the *bon dieu* or

god—he said *pony-too*—of Fatu-hiva was the *kuku*. She had been appalled at his suggestion that she should eat the symbolic tenement of her mother's deity, though she herself ate the transubstantiated host at communion in the Catholic church at Atuona. Not content with his insult to her ancestral god, and, taking his cue from the governor's roar of laughter at his French or his explanation, the cruel Song said a bitter thing to Ghost Girl.

"Eat the *kuku!*" he said. "It will taste better than your grandmother did."

"*Tuitui!* Shut your mouth!" retorted Vehine-hae. "There were no thieves in our tribe."

That was a hot shot at Song's crimes and penal record, and so animated became their repartee that the governor had to call a halt and demand mutual apologies. The *chef* informed him that his father in a foray upon Hanavave had taken as a prize of war the grandmother of Ghost Girl, and had eaten her, or at least, whatever tidbit he had liked. It was history that she had been eaten in Taaoa, Song's home, in the next valley to Atuona. No more vindictive remark than this, nor more hateful action than his offering the *kuku* to Ghost Girl, could be imagined in the rigid etiquette of Marquesas society. The tears were in the soft eyes of Vehine-hae, and the alarmed governor dismissed Song from further service that evening and took the weeping Fatu-hivan in his arms to console her.

"*Tapu! Tapu!*" sobbed Ghost Girl. The *kuku* was *tapu* to her teeth, as the American flag would be to the feet of a patriot. Song was without other belief than in the delight of drink, but Ghost Girl was a woman,

the support of every new cult and the prop of every old one. Superstition the world over will die last in the breast of the female. She survives subjugated races, and conserves the past, because her instincts are stronger and her faculties less active than man's, and her need of worship overwhelming.

That word *tapu* was still one to conjure with in the Marquesas. Flag, the policeman, and sole deputy of *Commissaire* Bauda on the island of Hiva-Oa, had invoked it a few days before, after an untoward incident. Bauda and I had returned on horseback from a journey to the other side of the island, and, at the post-tax-police office near the beach where Bauda lived, encountered Flag, drunk. Son of a famous dead chief, and himself an amiable, bright man of thirty, he had not resisted the temptation of Bauda's being gone for a day, to abstract a bottle of absinthe from a closet and consume the quart. Bauda upbraided him and ordered him to his house, but Flag seized a loaded rifle and sounded an ancient battle-cry. It had the blood-curdling quality of an Indian whoop.

Neither Bauda nor I was armed, and I was for shelter behind a cocoanut-tree. That would not do for Bauda, nor for discipline.

"Me with six campaigns in Africa! *Moi qui parle!*" exclaimed the former officer of the Foreign Legion, as he tapped his breast and voiced his astonishment at Flag's temerity. He strode toward the staggering *mutoi,* and, with utter disregard of the rifle, reached his side. He wrenched the weapon from him, and with a series of kicks drove him into the calaboose and locked the door on him.

"That means ten years in Noumea for him," said the *commissaire,* savagely. But after dinner, which I got, when he had meditated upon Flag's willingness as a cook and his ability to collect taxes, he lessened the sentence to a year at hard labor. I was not surprised to meet Flag at noon the next day with his accustomed white jacket with its red stripe upon the arm. Man cannot live without cooks, and perhaps I had aided leniency by burning a bird.

Flag explained to me, though sheepishly, that, overcome by the *litre* of absinthe as he was, he would not have injured a hair of Bauda's head.

"Bauda is *tapu.* I would meet an evil fate did I touch him," said Flag, when sober and sorry.

I stumbled on *tapus* daily. Vai Etienne, my neighbor, gave me a feast one day, and half a dozen of us, all men, sat at table. Vai Etienne, having lived several years in Tahiti had Frenchified ways. His mother, the magnificent Titihuti, who was splendidly tattooed from toe to waist, and who was my adopted mother, waited upon us. Offering her a glass of wine, and begging her to sit with us, I discovered that the glass her son drank from and the chair a man sat in were *tapu* to her. She took her wine from a shell, but would not sit at table with us. Of course, she never sat in chairs, anyhow, nor did Vai Etienne, but he had provided these for the whites.

The subject of the *tapus* of the South Seas was endless. The custom, *tabu* or *kapu* in Hawaiian, and *tambu in* Fijian, was ill expressed in our "taboo," which means the pressure of public sentiment, or family or group feeling. *Tapus* here were the conventions of

primitive people made awe-inspiring for enforcement because of the very willfulness of these primitives. The custom here and throughout society dated from the beginning of legend. Laws began with the rules laid down by the old man of the family and made dread in the tribe or sept by the hocus-pocus of the medicine man. *Tapus* may have been the foundation of all penal laws and etiquette. The Jews had a hundred niceties of religious, sanitary, and social *tapus*. Warriors were *tapu* in Homer's day, and land and fish were *tapu* to Grecian warriors, according to Plato. Confucius in the "Li Ki," ordained men and women not to sit on the same mat, nor have the same clothes-rack, towel, or comb, nor to let their hands touch in giving and receiving, nor to do a score of other trivial things. The old Irish had many *tapus* and totems, and many legends of harm wrought by their breaking, a famous one being "The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel."

In the Marquesas *tapus* were the most important part of life, as ceremony was at the court of the kings of France. They governed almost every action of the people, as the rules of a prison do convicts, or the precepts of a monastery monks. Death followed the disobedience of many, and others preserved one from the hands of enemies. There being no organized government in Polynesia, *tapus* took the place of laws and edicts. They were, in fact, spiritual laws, superstition being the force instead of a penal code. They imposed honesty, for if a man had any dear possession, he had the priest *tapu* it and felt secure. *Tapus* protected betrothed girls and married women from rakes.

A young woman who worked at the convent in

Atuona, near me, was made *tapu* against all work. She was never allowed to touch food until it had been prepared for her. If she broke the *tapu* the food was thrown away. From infancy, when a *taua* had laid the prohibition upon her, she lived in disagreeable idleness, afraid to break the law of the priest. Only in recent years did the nuns laugh away her fears, and set her to helping in their kitchen. She told me that she could not explain the reason for her having been *tapu* from effort, as the *taua* had died who chained her, without informing her.

If a child crawled under a house in the building, the house was burned. If I were building a boat, and, for dislike of me, some one named aloud the boat after my father, I destroyed the boat. Blue was *tapu* to women in Nuku-Hiva, and red, too. They could not eat bonito, *squid, popii,* and *koehi.* They might not eat bananas, cocoanuts, fresh breadfruit, pigs of brown color, goats, fowls and other edibles.

Females were forbidden to climb upon the sacred *paepaes,* to enter the men's club-houses (this *tapu* was enforced in America until the last few years), to eat with men, to smoke inside the house, to carry mats on their heads, and, saddest of all, to weep. Children might not carry one another pickaback. The *kuavena* fish was *tapu* to fishermen, as also *peata,* a kind of shark.

To throw human hair upon the ground was strictly prohibited. It might be trodden on, and bring mischief upon the former wearer. So the chiefs would never walk under anything that might be trodden on, and aboard ships never went below deck, for that reason.

Perhaps our superstition as to walking under ladders is derived from such a *tapu.* To stretch one's hand or an object over the head of any one was *tapu.* There were a hundred things *tapu* to one sex. Men had the advantage in these rules, for they were made by men.

The earthly punishments for breaking *tapus* ran from a small fine to death, and from spoliation to ostracism and banishment. Though there were many arbitrary *tapus,* the whims and fantasies of chiefs, or the wiles of priests, the majority of them had their beginning in some real or fancied necessity or desirability. Doubtless they were distorted, but, like circumcision and the Mosaic barring of pork to the Jews, here was health or safety of soul or body concerned. One might cite the Ten Commandments as very old *tapus.*

The utter disregard for the *tapus* of the Marquesans shown by the whites eventually had caused them to fall into general disrepute. They degenerated as manners decayed under the influx of barbarians into Rome, as Greek art fell before the corruption of the people. The Catholic, who bowed his head and struck his breast at the exaltation of the host, could understand the veneration the Marquesans had for their chief *tapus,* and their horror at the conduct of the rude sailors and soldiers who contemned them. But when they saw that no gods revenged themselves upon the whites, that no devil devoured their vitals when they ate *tapu* breadfruit or fish or kicked the high priest from the temple, the gentle savages made up their minds that the magic had lost its potency. So, gradually, though to some people *tapus* were yet very sacred, the fabric built up by thousands of years of an increasingly elaborate system of

laws and rites, melted away under the breath of scorn. The god of the white man was evidently greater than theirs. Titihuti, a constant attendent of the Catholic church, yet treasured a score of *tapus,* and associated with them these others, the dipping of holy water from the *bénitier,* the crossing herself, the kneeling and standing at mass, the telling of her beads, and the kissing of the cross.

The abandonment of *tapus* under the ridicule and profanation of the whites relaxed the whole intricate but sustaining Marquesan economy. Combined with the ending of the power of chiefs of hereditary caste, the doing away with *tapus* as laws set the natives hopelessly adrift on an uncharted sea. Right and wrong were no longer right or wrong.

This fetish system was very aptly called a plague of sacredness.

"Whoever was sacred infested everything he touched with consecration to the gods, and whatever had thus the microbe of divinity communicated to it could communicate it to other things and persons, and render them incapable of common use or approach. Not till the priest had removed the divine element by ceremonies and incantations could the thing or person become common or fit for human use or approach again."

The Marquesan priests strove with might and main to extend the *tapus,* for they meant power and gain. Wise and strong chiefs generally had private conferences with the priests and looked to it that *tapus* did not injure them.

Allied with *tapuism* was what is called in Hawaii *kahunaism,* that is the witchcraft of the priests, the

old wizards, who combined with the imposing and lifting of the bans, the curing or killing of people by enchantment. Sorcery or spells were at the basis of most primitive medicine. At its best it was hypnotism, mesmerism, or mind power. After coming through thousands of years of groping in physic and surgery, we are adopting to a considerable degree the methods of the ancient priests, the theurgy, laying on of hands, or invoking the force of mind over matter, or stated Christly methods of curing the sick. In Africa witchcraft or voodooism attains more powers than ever here, but even in Polynesia the test of a priest's powers was his ability to kill by willing it. In the New Zealand witchcraft schools no man was graduated until he could make some one die who was pointed out as his subject. A belief in this murderous magic is shared by many whites who have lived long in Polynesia or New Zealand. It was still practised here, and held many in deadly fear. The victims died under it as if their strength ran out like water.

The most resented exclusion against women in the Marquesas, and one of the last to be broken, was from canoes. Lying Bill, as the first seaman who sailed their ships here, had met shoals of women swimming out miles to the vessel as it made for port. In his youth they did not dare enter a canoe in Hiva-Oa. They tied their *pareus* on their heads and swam out, clambered aboard the ships miles from land with the *pareus* still dry.

"They'd jump up on the bulwarks," said Lying Bill, "an' make their twilight before touchin' the deck. The men would come out in canoes an' find the women had all the bloomin' plunder."

This *tapu,* most important to the men, was maintained until a Pankhurst sprang from the ranks of complaining but inactive women. There being many more men, women had always had a singular sex liberty, but, as I have said, the artful men had invoked rigid *tapus* to keep them from all water-craft. The females might have three or four husbands, might outshine an Aspasia in spell of pulchritude and collected tribute, and the portioned men must submit for passion's sake, but when economics had concern, the pagan priests brought orders directly from deity.

The dread gods of the High Place, the demons of the *Paepae Tapu,* had centuries before sealed canoes against women. In canoes women might wander; they might visit other bays and valleys, even other islands, and learn of the men of other tribes. They might go about and fall victims to the enemies of the race. They might assume to enter the Fae Enata, the House of Council, which was on a detached islet.

And they certainly would catch other fish than those they now snared from rocks or hooked, as both swam in the sea. Fish are much the diet of the Marquesans, and were propitiations to maid and wife—the current coin of the food market. To withhold fish was to cause hunger. The men alone assumed the hazard of the tossing canoe, the storms, the hot eye of the vertical sun, and the devils of the deep who grappled with the fisher; and theirs was the reward, and theirs the weapons of control.

But there were always women who grumbled, women who even laughed at such sacred things, and women who persisted. Finally the very altar of the Forbidden

Height was shaken by their madness. How and what came of it were told me by an old priest or sorcerer, as we sat in the shade of the great banyan on the beach and waited for canoes to come from the fishing.

The sorcerer and I passed the ceremonial pipe, and his words were slow, as becoming age and a severe outlook on life.

"There were willful women who would destroy the *tapu* against entering canoes?" I asked, to urge his speech.

"*E,* it was so!" he said.

"*Me imui?* What happened?" I queried further.

"A long time this went on. My grandfather told me of a woman who talked against that *tapu* when he was a boy."

"And she—?"

"She enraged the gods. She corrupted even men. A council was held of the wise old men, and the words went forth from it. She was made to keep within her house, and a *tapu* against her made it forbidden to listen to her wildness. In each period another woman arose to do the same, and more were corrupted. Some women stole canoes and were drowned. The sharks even hated them for their wickedness. We pointed out what fate had befallen them, but other women returned boasting. We slew some of these. But still it went on. You know, foreigner, how the *pokoko* enters a valley. One coughs and then another, and from the sea to the peak of Temetiu, many are made sick by the evil. It was so with us, and that revolt against religion."

He sighed and rubbed his stomach.

"Is it not time they came?" he asked.

"*Epo,* by and by," I answered. "Why did you men not yield? After all, what did it really matter?"

"*O te Etua e!* The gods of the High Place forbade, for the women's own sake!" he said indignantly, and muttered further.

To break down every sacred relation of centuries! To shatter the tradition of ages! To unsex their beloved mothers, wives, and sisters by the license of canoe riding! The dangers and the hardships of the carven tree were to be spared the consolers of men's labor and perils.

"Did the gods speak out plainly and severely?"

The *taua* looked at me quizzically. Foreigners mock holy things of nature. The bishop here had kicked the graven image of the deity of the cocoanut-tree.

"*Ea!* Po, the god of night, who rules the hereafter, spoke. The priest, the high priest, received the message. You know that grove by the Dark Cave. He heard the voice from the black recesses. *Tapu haa,* it said. A double *tapu* against any woman even lifting a paddle, or putting one toe, or her heel, or her shadow within a canoe. All the women were not wicked. Many believed their place was in the *huaa,* the home. These refused to join the brazen hussies, the deserters of the *popoi* pit. But the dance was dull, and there was strife. The *huona,* the artists, the women who rejoice men when they are merry, the women with three or more husbands, they all seemed to have the madness. They gained some of the younger men to their side, and they built that long house by those breadfruit-trees. They held their palaver there, and they refused to lie under their own *faa,* their roofs of pandanus. They would not dance by the light of the blazing candlenuts the mad

hura-hura, nor let those bravers of the sea share their mats on the *paepae* of the valley. Many husbands fought one another when their wife did not return. The tribe grew apart."

He sighed and took a shark's tooth from his loincloth, with which he scraped our pipe.

I went and lay where the curling sea caressed my naked feet. I was within easy distance of the *taua's* voice. One must not hurry even in speech in these Isles of Leisure. The old man blew through the bowl and then the stem, and, taking pieces of tobacco from his *pareu,* he packed the pipe and lit it. He drew a long whiff first, as one pours wine first in one's own glass, and handed it to me.

He responded when I put the pipe again between his trembling fingers.

"The gods grew weary. Messages but few came from them. Priests' wives even ceased to cook the breadfruit on the hot stones, and went to live in that accursed *haa ite.*"

"We esteem such a long house, and call it a club," I interposed in subconscious defense of my own habits.

"*Oti!* Maybe. Your island forgot wisdom early. You even cook your fish. We will make the fire now."

I rose and shook off the warm salt water from my body. My *pareu* of blue with white stars was on a descending branch of the banyan. I put it about my thighs and folded it for holding. Then arm in arm we walked to our own house on the raised *paepae* of great basalt stones.

I heaped the dried cocoanut fiber in a hollow of a

rock, and about it set the polished coral of our kitchen. A spark from the pipe set it afire, and, heaped with more fiber and wood of the hibiscus, before long the stones blushed with the heat, and, growing redder yet, were ready for their service.

The priest of old had withdrawn to make a sauce of limes and seawater, which he brought out within the half-hour from the penthouse in which we stored our simple goods. It was in a *tanoa* formerly used for *kava,* a trencher of the false ebony, black in life, but turned by the years of decoction of the mysterious narcotic to a marvelous green. It was like an ancient bronze in the open. Here we were both ready for our delayed food, I, beside the glowing coral stones, the bones of once living organisms, and the old man, with his bowl of sauce. But the food tarried.

He fluttered about the *paepae* and chewed a bit of the hibiscus wood to stay his hunger. In the breadfruit-grove the *komako*, the Marquesan nightingale, deceived by a lowering cloud or perhaps impelled by a sudden passion, was early pouring his soul into the shadowy air. I tended my fire and wondered at man's small relation to most of creation.

"Go, my son," said the *taua* impatiently, "to the opening of the forest, and see if they do not come over the waves!"

I strolled to where the beach met the jungle. An outrigger canoe was coming through the surf. A faint shout from it reached me. I ran back to him where he still chewed an inedible splinter.

"Epo," I said, and made the fire fiercer. He stirred his *mitiaroa,* the sauce, and watered his lips.

"How was the *tapu* broken finally?" I asked, casually.

"They are long away," he observed with his eyes on the break in the trees.

"They are just now beaching the canoe," I said soothingly. "We will eat in a moment. But *taua,* you leave me hungry for that last word.

"The women of Oomoa tried to break down your *tapu* of time immemorial against their entering canoes, and there was trouble. The gods were against them, and yet to-day—"

"The gods got tired," he interrupted me. "The chiefs became afraid of the continuous *hakapahi i te faufau,* the excitement and turmoil. You know the chiefs and priests decided all things. Now the women cried out for a *vavaotina,* for each one of the tribe to lay a candlenut in one of two *popoi* troughs. One was assent to the *tapu,* and the other against it."

There was argument first, said the *taua.* After the priests had called down the curse of Po and other gods of might on all who would invoke a popular judgment of a sacred and time-webbed commandment, the chiefs pictured the dangers to women and to canoes, to the tribe and the valley, if women broke loose from the centuried bonds that forbade canoeing. Older women and some younger beauties, the latter fearing hurt to their prestige by less luxurious belles, urged the inviolability of the *tapu.*

The women of the Long House, the rebels, merely demanded instant casting of the *ama* nuts into the *hoana.* He himself, the *taua* said, then made the great error of his life. He swiftly counted in his mind those

for and against, and, convinced that he had a huge majority for the prevailing law and order, shouted out that the *vavaotina,* though long disused, was just and truly Marquesan.

The troughs were brought from a near-by house to the beach, and the trial was staged.

"At that moment," said the old priest, "a canoe which had been cunningly making its way to the shore, as if by a prearranged signal, suddenly took the breakers and came careening upon the sand. Out of it stepped Taipi, a woman of that red-headed tribe of Tahuata, arranged her kilt of *tapa,* and advanced. She was like an apparition, but fatal to my count. She was a *moi kanahau,* beautiful and strong, and the first woman who had ever come except as a prisoner from that fierce island. But she was stronger in her desires than any man. She was unbelieving and unafraid of sacred things. A hundred men sprang forward to greet Taipi. American, she was as the red jasmine, as the fire of the oven, odorous and lovely, but hot to the touch and scorching to know. That woman laughed at the men, and, as if word had been sent her, took her place among the women. She seized a candlenut and threw it exactly into the unholy *hoana.*

"'O men of Oomoa,' she cried, 'so you fear that women may paddle faster and better than you! *Haametau hae!* You are cowards. Look, I have come a night and a day alone, and no shark god has injured me and I am not weary.'

"There followed a shower of candlenuts into the demon trough, as the stones from the slings in battle. We were beaten, as youth ever defeats age when new

gods are powerful. Our day and the power of all *tapus* waned and ended soon. Once in the canoes those women made us release the *tapu* against their eating bananas and, later, pig. In a thousand years no Marquesan woman had tasted a banana or eaten pig. They were for the men and there were good reasons known to the gods. But let woman leave ever so little way the narrow path of obedience and of doing without things that are evil for her, and she knows no limits. She is without the *koekoe,* the spirit that is in man. The race has fallen on sorrow."

He sat down on his powerful haunches and chanted an improvisation about the lost splendor. Low and mournful, the psalm of a Jeremiah, his deep voice rumbled as he fixed his dark eyes on the great globes of the breadfruit hanging by the plaited roof of the hut.

And through an opening of the forest came the two women of his household, Very White and Eyes of the Great Stars, heavily laden with their morning's catch of fish. They came tripping over the green carpet of the forest, laughing at some incident of their fishing, and threw down beside him the strung circles of shining *ika,* large and brilliant *bonito,* the mackerel of brilliancy, and the *maoo,* the gay and gaudy flying-fish.

"Oh, ho! sorcerer," said I. "Did ever men match with the cunning of these scaly ones with greater luck? The stones are ready for their broiling."

The *taua* made a wry face and stirred his sauce. He dipped a *popo* into it and ate it greedily, bones and all.

"E, e!" he said and spat out the words. *"Piau!* The women catch their own fish now."

CHAPTER XV

The dismal abode of the Peyrals—Stark-white daughter of Peyral—Only white maiden in the Marquesas—I hunt wild bulls—Peyral's friendliness—I visit his house—He strikes me and threatens to kill me—I go armed—Explanation of the bizarre tragi comedy.

AS I walked up from the beach of Atuona, where I had touched the shore of the Marquesas for the first time, I had remarked a European dwelling, squalid, forbidding and peculiarly desolate. Painted black originally, the heat and storms of years had worn and defaced it, the sun had shrunk the boards from one another, and posts and beams had gone awry. It was set in a cocoanut-grove, the trees so close together that their huge fronds joined and roofed out sky and light. The narrow road along the grove had been raised later, and formed a dike so that with the heavy rains of the season the land all about was a gloomy marsh to which the sun seldom penetrated. The dingy gallery of the house fronting the road had a broken rail and dilapidated stairs, and in the shallow swamp and about the entrance were cast-off articles of household and plantation. A dismaying mingling of decayed European inventions with native bareness framed a dismal and foreboding scene, contrasting with the brilliancy of nature in the open.

I had felt a sudden fear of the possibilities of degradation, as if the dreary house were a symbol of the white man's deterioration in these wild places. A sense

of physical and spiritual abandonment to alien environment, without fitness of soul or habit, depressed me.

As we passed, I saw on the veranda a girl of sixteen or seventeen, with a white face and light blue eyes. Her long yellow hair was slightly confined by a piece of ribbon, but hung down loose on her rounded shoulders. She wore a blue cotton gown, becoming and not in keeping with her soiled and frayed surroundings. She seemed not to notice us until we were opposite her, when she raised her head and glanced at us a moment. Those off the schooner she must have known, for she fixed her eyes on me the fleeting instant of her gaze. They had the innocence and appeal of a fawn and the melancholy and detachment of a cloistered nun. There was no curiosity in them, though we were the only white visitors in months, and had come with the new governor, who had landed but the day before. A second or two her eyes met mine and conveyed an unconscious message of youth and sorrow, of budding womanhood that had had no guidance or companionship, and only sad dreams.

From the room opening on the gallery a man came and shouted to us *"Bon jour!"* in a raven-like croak. He was in soiled overalls, barefooted, and reeling drunk. His brown hair and beard had not been cut for months or years, and rudely margined his bloated, grievous face, of rugged strength, in which grim despair contended with fierce pride.

"That is Peyral," said Ducat, the second mate of the *Fetia Taiao.* He is always half-seas over, except when he sews. He is the village tailor, and makes the priest's gowns and clothes for any one who will buy them.

That daughter of his is the only white girl in the Marquesas. She is all white, and he keeps her chained in that dark house as if he was afraid some one would eat her."

"You know bloody well why 'e keeps 'er there," said Lying Bill. " 'E knows you an' me and 'Allman and 'earty bucks like us is not to be trusted; 'at 's why! I knew 'er mother and 'er grandparents. 'E was a British calvary officer 'oo 'ad served in Injia, an' come 'ere with 'is wife, an Irish lady, to take charge of the store an' plantation now owned by the Germans at Tahaaku. They 'ad one daughter. Peyral was a non-com. on a French war-ship that come 'ere to shoot up the natives, an' 'e was purty good to look at then. 'E could do anything, an' when 'e got 'is papers from the French navy 'e went to work for the plantation, courted the girl, an', when 'er parents were n't lookin', married 'er. They died, an' 'e set up a proper 'ouse 'ere, an' was bloomin' prosp'rous till 'is wife died o' the *pokoko,* this gallopin' consumption that takes off the natives. Then he give in, and went to 'ell. 'E 'as three girls, two little ones, an' 'ow they live I don't know. When 'is wife died 'e painted that 'ouse black, an' 'e ain't touched it since. 'E gathers 'is copra, an' makes a few clo's now an' 'en, an' spends all the money on absinthe. The girl looks after 'er sisters, but 'e guards 'er like a bleedin' dragon. She never goes off the veranda there now except to church on Sundays and 'olidays. I don't know what 'll 'e do with 'er, but 'e 'll kill any one that goes too near 'er like Ducat 'ere or meself."

When I was settled in the House of the Golden Bed, as the Marquesans called the cabin I had rented from

Apporo, the wife of Great Fern, in exchange for my brass bed at my departure, I went almost every day with Exploding Eggs to the beach to fish or swim or to ride the surf on a board. The road wended from my house past the garden of the palace and thence to the sea. Between the governor's and the beach was only Peyral's noisome residence, and twice a day I passed it within a few feet. Sometimes he was at his sewing-machine on the veranda, or gathering the cocoanuts that had fallen and drying them in the sun, but generally the shaggy Breton was in a stupor or murmurously intoxicated, sitting on a bench or lying on the ground, and talking to himself in the way of morose, unsocial men when inebriated. His daughter was usually on the veranda sewing by hand, or apparently wrapt in thoughts which obscured her consciousness and painted despondence on her countenance. I tried not to stare at her, but when I made sure that she was oblivious of me, or intentionally not seeing, I observed her narrowly.

How could she have preserved that miraculous blondness in these islands? It was amazing. Her skin was like the inside of a cocoanut, smooth as satin. The years in that shadowy house had bleached her white flesh until it was pearl-like in transparency, the blue veins as in fine marble. Though hardly seventeen her figure was the luxuriant one of these latitudes, rounded as the breadfruit, curving in opulency under her single garment, a diaphanous tunic. Her hair that I had judged yellow at first sight was silver-gold, almost as white as her flesh, but with glints of topaz and amber. Silky, glistening, as fine as the filament of a web, it did not hide her shapely ears and fell in profusion almost to her waist.

I never saw her smile. Her azure eyes had wept until their fountains were dried. She was numb, mute, never having seen aught in sleep but ghosts. She was, in this voluptuous atmosphere, herself voluptuous in contour and color, but frozen. A thousand brutal words from Peyral must have made her so. In drunkenness he was harsh, and in less violent hours sullen and suspicious. The children feared him as *Nancy* had *Bill Sykes,* but there was a powerful attachment between them. He must have described to her horrible things that he guarded her against, and have threatened unspeakable punishments if she disobeyed him.

Daughter of Europeans, granddaughter of Celt and Anglo-Saxon, this girl did not know her father's or mother's language but feebly, and had no more knowledge of or contact with the world of her forefathers than if she were all Marquesan. I fancied her spirit infinitely confused by her blood and her surroundings, vague aspirations perhaps stirring her to desire for other things than the savage and stupid ones about her. In the church she must have had some respite. I watched her there a number of times, bowed over her Marquesan book of the ritual, reciting the prayers, and beating her sweet breast at the *mea culpa* as might the most repentant sinner or worst hypocrite.

No one called on Peyral save a very occasional buyer of copra or an infrequent customer for clothes. These, prevalently, met him on the trail or at church, and dealt with him there. Either his jealous solitude was respected, or disagreeable experiences had caused the villagers to shun his dwelling. He himself infrequently dropped in at the store of Le Brunnec, or the German's

establishment at Tahaaku where he had wooed the daughter of the English officer and the Irish exile. At the Catholic church only was he a regular attendant, sitting in the rear by the *pahua* shell holy-water font, and mumbling the responses. The children were in the pews, the sexes separated, and I, the few times I was there, at the door where the breeze was freshest and I might go out unseen. One Sunday he spoke to me. I was as astonished as if Father David had begun a *hula* at the altar.

"You are American," he said in French, his voice hoarse and broken.

I said I was and that I had come to the islands to stay an uncertain length of time. We exchanged the day's greetings after that, and when Painter Le Moine and I were examining the remains of the studio of Paul Gauguin, who had died here ten years before, it was Peyral who showed us how everything had been and who told me of his daily intercourse with the famous symbolist. Thus we struck up a real acquaintance, if not friendship, and he would tarry a quarter of an hour on my *paepae* to drink a shell of rum and to talk about copra and the coming and going of schooners. He drew me out about my plans, whether I was going to settle in the Marquesas or return to my own country, and evinced a flattering interest in my future. And I was flattered, as I am easily by the friendliness of unfriendly people, and did not question his genuine liking for me.

Ah Suey, the Chinese baker and storekeeper, who had been tried for the murder of an American, and who spoke English he had learned at Los Angeles and at sea,

might have enlightened me, but that I was beyond doubt. I was at Ah Suey's to dance a jig and to sing "The Good Old Summertime" to amuse him. The saturnine Chinese, after a drink of rum, said:

"Peylalee all time come you housee takee dlinkee. He no good. More better you tell him *poponihoó* go hellee! Makee tlubble for you his daughtah."

Ah Suey puzzled me, but I do not like advice or warning, and I shunted the subject.

Peyral was a hunter. He would wander, always alone, in the upper valleys, to shoot *kuku,* or along the beach for salt-water birds, walking slowly and not alertly; but he was a crack shot and hardly ever failed to bring back a bag of game. He had learned marksmanship at sea, or perhaps in his native Brittany, and his cartridges went far. He was not contented with birds, but also tramped to the mountains to kill goats or even the wild bulls that were growing scarce there under a promiscuous use of firearms. Le Brunnec, the trader, an amiable and intelligent Breton, and I met him there, fortunately, at a critical moment for me. We had, Le Brunnec and I, climbed on horses in the late afternoon to a plateau high up in the hills and camped there the night. In that altitude it was cool after the sun had set, and we sat about a fire of twigs and branches until we were sleepy. We were considerably past the line of cocoanut-palms, and in a rich and varied flora. Magnificent chestnut, ironwood, rose-apple, and other tropical trees formed dark groups about us, and masses of *huetu* or mountain plantains lined the slopes. We had washed down our dinner with a bottle of Moselle, and had a mellow and philosophical hour before sleep.

Far above us we could see a pair of ducks, a kind of non-migratory mallard. They lived only in the lonely valleys or woods, and nested on the tops of distant ridges where they laid a half dozen eggs. The ducklings must be carried by their parents to the feeding grounds hundreds of feet below.

We talked about the decimation of the Marquesans —Le Brunnec in ten years had seen them depopulated almost 50 per cent.

"They are unhappy and soul-sick," he said. "They are animals, and, when they had freedom under their own rule, prospered enormously. Now there are a couple of thousand instead of the hundred thousand the whites found. They are in the cage of civilization and cannot stand the bars. We are adaptable because we are an admixture of many races, and have had to exist in changing environments or die. Millions must have died from the same thing that destroys the Marquesans, but there were enough to keep on and build up again. The quality of adaptability, of making the best of it, is wonderful. One time in Tahiti I was at the Annexe lodging-house of Lovaina when a Frenchman arrived by steamer from Martinique. He had with him his four children. The mother, a native of that island, was dead, and the oldest child was a girl of thirteen, a child-woman, naïve but clever, and very charming. For four years she had been mother to the other three, since she was nine, and they were as neat as a gunboat. She was tiny and undeveloped physically, but necessity had adapted her perfectly to her task. The father was looking for work, and, not finding it in Tahiti, was off to Dacca, in Africa, leaving the babies

in her care. *Mon Dieu!* It was brave to see her bathing them, brushing their hair, reproving them, and feeding them. If she had been five years older I would have tried to marry her, and the whole flock. Now, you see, she could keep on because she was continuing the white race customs and ideals, and understood them, hard as it was; but these poor people have been told to do something they don't understand, and that is not their ideal. Now take that girl of old Peyral! Her mother spoke English, and her father is French, and she went to the nuns' school here for four or five years. Yet she can hardly speak anything but Marquesan, and in that tongue she replies to her father, and talks to her sisters. She is almost a Marquesan, and as they are unhappy in their prison so is she. She is the only white woman here, and she has no companions, and her father won't let her be a native. *Pauvre enfant!* Now, her I would n't marry for all the cocoanuts on this island. There is one other, Mademoiselle Narbonne, who is the richest person in the Marquesas, for she, too, is fit neither for native life nor for white. The nuns have spoiled her, as her mother spoiled the Peyral girl."

And so to bed on the grass with a blanket about us.

In the morning we were up at daybreak, and, after coffee and hardtack, we rode toward the sea. There was a faint trail, but Le Brunnec was a skilled tracker and picked up the spoor in a few minutes. After half an hour we saw fresher traces of our prey, and began to make plans for the attack. We felt sure we were the only ones on the plateau, and so were safe, for Marquesans are reckless with guns, and when we heard a horse coming toward us we halted and waited. It was

Peyral. We could see his frowsy head a quarter of a mile away as it bobbed in the trot.

"Eh bien!" said Le Brunnec, philosophically. "He is not so bad here. It is curious that when Peyral has been drunk for a month, and reforms so as not to die, he goes to the mountains for a week and shoots an animal."

We said *bon jour,* and he joined us. Le Brunnec proposed that we try to kill two bulls, share the labor of carrying the meat to Atuona, and divide it there. Peyral gruffly assented, and, as he was the more skillful *chasseur,* gave us our stations. We were to start up one or more *taureaux sauvages* and to endeavor to refrain from firing at them until they were as near as possible to the cliff. We were successful and had felled one, when another appeared.

"Prennez garde!" shouted Le Brunnec. "That *hakiuka* has blood in his eye."

"Go around to the left and drive him toward me," commanded Peyral.

I was riding fast about his flank when my horse put his foot in a rat's hole. I had my rifle on my right arm and I must have used it as a vaulting-pole unwittingly, for I struck the earth about ten feet from my mount. I was struggling to my feet when I became aware that the *hakiuka* was approaching with malice in his snortings. My horse had got up but too late to bear me to security, and my rifle was choked with mud. I rushed for a tree but could see none with low branches. I had a big knife in my belt, a kind of Bowie, and, as I felt the hot breath of the animal on me and saw his horns magnified to elephant's tusks, I drew the weapon. The beast was within five feet of me when he dropped. Pey-

ral had put a Winchester bullet in his heart. His head was at my feet as he gave it a mighty toss, and laid it on the sward of maidenhair ferns in submission to man's invention.

When I had made sure of the poor *hakiuka's* being absolutely dead, and had shaken myself together, finding no injuries, I thanked Peyral, whom Le Brunnec was already extolling for marksmanship and quickness of thought.

"*Rien!* It is nothing!" replied the shaggy man. "I like to kill."

We put ropes over the horns of the victims, and forced our horses to drag them to a certain spot at the edge of the cliff. Below was a wide shelf of rocks at water-level. We pushed the stiffening bodies over the edge and let them fall. Then we rode back to Atuona, and in a big canoe with three Marquesans, Great Fern, Mouth of God, and Exploding Eggs, went for the carcasses. To retrieve them into the craft was a difficult task.

The sea surged against the rocks so that we could not tie up close to them, but several of us jumped on them while others remained in the canoe, with a line ashore and a kedge-anchor aft. The Marquesans cut up the bulls into quarters, and each we tied to a rope and dragged through the water into the canoe. Over our heads a cloud of heron and sea-gulls shrieked for their share, and when we had left the rocks these birds screamed and fought for the entrails. They had been attracted when the bulls were killed, and for hours had pecked vainly at the carcasses. The dragging them over the land and hurling them to the ledge, and their hours of

Malleium Gossip, Le Brunner, and his wife, at peace

Photo by Dr. Malcolm Douglas

Exploding Eggs and his chums packing copra

Frederick O'Brien and Dr. Malcolm Douglas at home in Tahiti

lying there, had drawn an immense concourse of the sea-birds. There were many thousands before we got away, and so rapacious were they that they circled over our heads and snatched at the bloody meat in the canoe. We had to wave our shirts at them to frighten them away. Sharks smelling the blood swam about the canoe, and we were not a little afraid. We had brought no guns in the canoe, and we were forced to strike at them with paddles, and shout imprecations at them. They did not enter the breakers, which we ran to the sand. At the beach near *Commissaire* Bauda's residence and offices, we turned over to Peyral his third, and, taking the remainder into the village, Great Fern with saw and knife provided every household, including the Catholic and Protestant clergy and the nuns, with ample for a meal or two. Peyral threw his part over his horse's back and left us, muttering that he would salt it down for the uncertain future.

Peyral became increasingly friendly, and a number of times stopped me on my way to and from the shore to invite me to drink with him. Le Brunnec said that this was something new for Peyral, and that he must be "going crazy." But, like Ah Suey, Le Brunnec hid his real thought from me when I defended Peyral and said that he was sinned against overmuch. Peyral's daughter—I hardly ever caught sight of the younger two—would desert the veranda if I came upon it, but once he called her, and when she did not respond immediately added a *"sacré"* to his order for her to come and be presented to me.

"She is a fine girl, but shy," he said, and patted her clumsily.

Mademoiselle Peyral trembled under his heavy caress, and with merely a slight, awkward bow to me hurried into the sombre chamber.

"She is shy," he repeated as he drank his absinthe with mouthing and grimacing. "She needs a man to train her right, a husband, eh, a gentleman, *mon garçon.* Is not that right?"

Peyral's voice was almost gentle, but his mood changed in a breath. He struck the board hard with his shell, and yelled, "Do you understand, American, I said a gentleman. Her mother was aristocrat. Do you get that into your noddle?"

Exploding Eggs, who had waited for me on the road with my towels, laughed as we ran toward the surf.

"Peyral *paeá,*" he said. "Too much drink, too much fight."

I did not stop after that when he bade me have a *goutte* with him, for I was sensible of a deep pity for the girl and an ardent desire to save her embarrassment, the deadly unreasoning shame or perplexity that overwhelmed her at her father's gross attitude and my presence. After a few weeks, Peyral did not sing out to me any more, and I was conscious of a coldness, of a return of his first relation to me, and then of fits and starts of friendship. I felt oppressed by his changing tempers, and attributed them to his varying degrees of inebriety.

I split my rain-coat one day, and, after making a bad job of repairing it, thought of Peyral and his skill as a tailor. With the coat on my arm I climbed the stairs to his porch, and, finding no one there, called out Peyral's name. My voice echoed through the house, and,

with the intention of scribbling a note and leaving the coat, I entered the nearest room. Mademoiselle Peyral was sitting near the machine but was not sewing. She trembled as I approached her, and looked frightened. I am timid with women, and her nervousness communicated itself to me. I wished I was not there. She was half uncovered, having on only a chemise, and her dishabille added to my confusion, though that very morning I had bathed in the river nude with Titihuti and others.

"Please give your father this coat, and ask him to repair it," I said, and put it down. Her downcast eyes and heaving bosom, her evident extreme timidity, and her pitiable situation overcame me. She was of my own race, and she was so white and so fair. Before I could restrain myself, I said in English, "Don't be afraid of me! I am very sorry for you," and I patted her shoulder as I might have a child's.

She shrank from me in apparent horror, and ran from the room into a farther one, screaming in Marquesan. I started to follow her to explain or to appease her, but reconsidered.

Though I was conscious of no wrong, the familiar incidents in newspapers and gossip of misinterpreted gestures and of false allegations rose to my mind as her cries resounded through the black and tristful house. I moved toward the porch to leave, and deliberated, and awaited some one's coming. Better to tell the fact and make a stand there and then, said common sense. But no one answered her alarm, and after a few minutes I left, with the coat, and returned to my own cabin. For half an hour my mind was actively going over the affair to

find out what might be at the bottom of it, and, of course, to make certain of my clearance of the least onus of guilt.

Perhaps I was the first man other than her father who had put his hand on her, and I had done that, no matter how innocently! The nuns had overbalanced her standard of modesty, and her father's brutal admonitions had made her hysterical! I tried myself and, having found myself not guilty of even forwardness or discourtesy, I cooked my dinner, poured myself a shell of Munich beer that had been cooled in the river, and dismissed the trifle.

The next afternoon as I passed the governor's garden on the road to the beach, I saw Peyral on the veranda with the official. I thought of the rent in my rain-coat, and entered the grounds to speak to him about it. As I approached the steps I heard the tailor speaking loudly and vehemently to Monsieur l'Hermier, and spilling the absinthe in the glass in his hand.

"*Kaoha!*" I said, and Peyral turned and saw me. His face purpled, and he shouted in French something I did not understand, and appealed to the governor for corroboration. A twinge of privity with his emotion swept over me, and I am sure I flushed and looked the culprit. I hadn't much time for analysis, for Peyral stood up and flung his glass at my head. It went wide. I took a step toward him and asked:

"What's the matter with him, *Monsieur l'Administrateur?* Is he drunker than usual?"

"*Je ne sais pas,*" replied the governor, with a shrug of his shoulder. "He has come here to lodge a complaint against you of maltreating his daughter. He

wants you tried and sent to prison, and he wants to institute a suit against you for damages. I have told him to return when he is sober. He is bitter, Monsieur, and he is, after all, a Frenchman."

Peyral got up from his chair, unsteadily. The governor discreetly left the veranda and entered his study. I sat down in sheer weariness, when suddenly the frenzied drunkard confronted me.

"Sacré Americain!" he yelled. "You will insult the daughter of a French patriot. *Cochon!* I will show you what I do to such people as you!"

He flung himself upon me and struck me in the face. Peyral was fifty pounds heavier than I, but he was very drunk. I drove my fist into his chin, and, following the blow with another, sent him sprawling. I regretted my violence as I saw the poor devil staggering to his feet unsteadily, but when, with the most blasphemous profanity and the basest epithets in the dialect of Brest, he lurched at me again with his two hundred pounds of rank bulk, charity fled from my panting heart, and I realized that I must fight or retreat. Years of addiction to alcohol had not made my assailant anything but tough and strong physically, and I was no match for him if he was not reeling. He plunged toward me as a drunken elephant might go to combat. I decided not to run, because I wanted to continue to live in Atuona underided, and so I sprang to meet him, and hitting him full tilt in the chin and chest, carried him hard down to the boards, where we grappled and exchanged powerless blows.

We had knocked over table, bottle, glasses, and chairs, and the uproar was immense. Song of the

Nightingale, Exploding Eggs, Ghost Girl and Many Daughters, the little leper lass, had come scurrying from the kitchen. Maybe the governor had a plan, or his dignity was offended, for, without appearing, he gave an order to Song, and the quartet of natives threw themselves on us, and disentangled us. Song, who later confessed to me that he had a grudge against the tailor, took the opportunity in the hurly-burly to deal him vicious blows, and then drove the cursing, struggling Breton through the garden and out the gateway. Peyral's last words were a threat to kill me the next time we met. The village had gathered, and Apporo, my landlady, Mouth of God, Malicious Gossip, his wife, and a dozen others were running toward the palace. Song dismissed them with a grandiloquent gesture, and his obscene badinage dissolved their curiosity in gales of laughter.

With the disturbance abated, the governor joined me, his ordinary merry self again, and we drank a libation to Mars. My clothes were torn, my jaw ached, and my body was bruised from the clutches of the tailor.

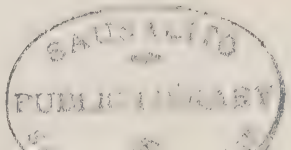
"Do not molest yourself!" said the executive. "I do not entertain any evil of you. When the allegation is formally made, I, as magistrate, will hear the evidence. According to his own statement, no one was there but his daughter and you. I believe you a man of honor. And women? *Mon vieux,* I have known and loved many of them. I am a doctor, and a student of life. They are incomprehensible. But we must take precautions. He has said he will kill you, so you must be on guard. You have no pistol? *Eh bien!* I will lend you my Browning automatic I had in Senegal. It is

loaded. Defend yourself, but do not step on his property. *Nous verrons!"*

The governor was dramatic, not to say melodramatic, and, to my nervous conception, he took too lightly the crime upon my person. I was the one to bring a charge, not Peyral. Assaulted in the palace, at the throne of justice, in the presence of the judge, I was handed a deadly firearm by the arbiter, and told to protect myself. It was like the Wild West, or a stage farce. But I had come a thousand miles with him on a small vessel, and knew his delight in the least diversion that would relieve his *ennui* in a monotonous period of service. This was but a scherzo in a slow program. However, I thanked him and, with the heavy pistol, went to the House of the Golden Bed. The girl was uppermost in my unstable reflections.

What had possessed her to lie so? She must have distorted my ingenuous action damnably to cause her father to beset me before the governor, and to swear to kill me! I pictured her as I had last seen her, and try as I would I could not hate her. I lay down with the Browning beside me, and dreamed that she was testifying against me at the seat of judgment, and that an austere God pointed downward. Exploding Eggs was cooking a rasher of bacon on my improvised stove on the *paepae* the next morning, when Flag, the *mutoi,* brought a note, he acting as general messenger of the island. It was in a strange hand and on dirty paper. I could not make out the language except a few French words, and the signature not at all, an so after breakfast I took it to Le Brunnec at his store.

Le Brunnec glanced over it and looked puzzled.



Then he spoke low, in French, so that the natives in the room might not glean a word.

"Mais," he said, "it is from Peyral, and it is written in Breton and absinthe. I translate it for you into your English:

" 'Monsieur: You cannot *éviter'*—what you say?—escape—'from your insult to *ma fille.* You have insulted and struck me, too. I will not seek the tribunal to make your apology. The governor has told me you are Irishman, and so you are of the same blood like the grandparent of my child. In France what you have done must be paid for in blood or by marriage. Even if you make intention to return to your own country no matter. You must marry my daughter or you will be buried in *Calvaire cimetière*—what you say—graveyard?—'It is necessary that you send me word by tomorrow or I will make justice on you.' He says he is yours respectful. Well, by gar, it is a situation, my friend, but I say to you one thing: do not be afraid. He slip back already. You have a revolver? Yes? Keep it in the hand or the pants."

The merchant took up his sugar scoop to begin business. My wholeness or health seemed not to interest him seriously. I sauntered up the path in meditation. My feet took me into the mission churchyard, and I sat on the roots of a gigantic banian-tree near the colossal crucifix brought from France by the priests for the jubilee of 1900. The mad note of Peyral had stunned me, and, instead of thinking hard and clearly upon my situation, I fell into fatuous reverie.

A gentle and lovely savage she was, and unspoiled by civilization. What a singular and perhaps entrancing

task to teach her only the best in it, to unfold through English or French the music and literature of the world, to take her perhaps to the great cities? Or if I myself was done with civilization, as I sometimes persuaded myself I was, what more delightful companion than this simple virgin of Atuona? To fish, to swim, to roam the plateaus; to have a library and to get the reviews and the new books by the schooners, to create a living idyll! Love would undoubtedly be the response of kindness, of sympathy, of tenderness, of love itself. But could I love her? There would be children. And they would grow up here. I remembered her own white feet in the mud of this village. Their mother! And with Peyral's blood in them! Peyral! Damn him! What had I done to make him attack me, to say he would kill me? To spoil my peace? I would wear the Browning about my waist, and if he winked an eyelash I would shoot first. He had brought it on himself. She had lied to him. I had no liking to be in Calvary with Gauguin. My grave would be forgotten like his. A man here was a bubble in the breeze. It burst and was nothing.

All these ideas rushed through my head as I returned to my house. I had concluded not to pass Peyral's house unarmed, so I tied a string about my middle over my *pareu* and fastened the revolver to it. With one pull the knot undid and the gun came loose into my hand. I wore a light linen coat over my bare body, and no one was the wiser.

Thus ready for my would-be murderer or father-in-law, I whistled to Exploding Eggs the next forenoon, and, he with towels in hand, we walked toward the

sands. There was no one on the veranda of the palace. Except for the residence of the lepers by the cemetery there was no other house toward the beach but that of my enemy.

Obscure under the heavy-leaved palms, I could not be sure that Peyral was not ensconced on his gallery with a bottle of absinthe and a shotgun or rifle waiting to pot-shot me. He knew my habit of bathing every day, and maybe was chuckling over scaring me from the spot. I walked boldly and briskly past his house. There was no figure on the porch but that of a girl. I glimpsed her only, for an emotion of shame—inexplicable shame—directed my eyes away from her. I continued on to the water, and, hiding my revolver in the trailing *pahue* with its morning-glory blossoms, I took up my surfboard and forgot Peyral in that most exhilarating of sports.

Exploding Eggs dragged his tiny canoe from the bushes, and we launched it and pushed it through the surf. With rare dexterity he paddled it seaward, I with my board on my knees, a calm admirer of his marvelous control of the little craft: he and it the first Marquesan and the first canoe I had seen in this archipelago. When we were out half a mile or so we lay still for the right breaker. He watched and after a few minutes began to paddle with intense energy until the wave caught him. We swung to its crest and clung there as we dashed in at a fast pace without motion on our part. But, when half-way, Exploding Eggs took my board from me, and, handing me the paddle, he suddenly plunged with it from the canoe and, extended full

on the board in rhythm with the billow I rode, accompanied me to shore.

The sun was dropping down the western sky when we dressed to leave the beach, Exploding Eggs in his loin-cloth and I in mine, with my coat over the Browning. The hours in the salt water with the exercise and the laughter had cleared the cobwebs of blame from my brain. My innocent blood would be on the guilty head of Peyral did he kill me. That was comforting. However, I made sure that the knot slipped easily, and with my valet beside me I made the start.

I had gained half-way when I saw Peyral coming toward me, a thousand feet away, with a shot-gun over his shoulder. He was silhouetted against the setting sun and could not be mistaken. His burly form, his beard, his general shagginess made him unmistakable, as was also the outline of the weapon.

There was no stopping. The swamp was on either side of the ten-foot road, the beach behind me. Fleeing was out of the question. I might have taken a side road had there been one, but just such conditions as presented themselves then must be met daily. I kept on, and, as we came nearer, our eyes joined and remained steadily fixed. I do not know how Peyral felt, but I was as fascinated as the proverbial bird by the snake. I moved as if by magnetic power toward my probable slayer, and he toward me. Neither of us made a movement except that of our legs and stiff bodies.

There came a second when we were about four feet apart, each hugging the edge of the road. Our eyes were held straight ahead, and mine remained so. We

appeared to hesitate as if we might whirl and seize each other or draw our weapons. The shot-gun was on his shoulder but in the flash of an eye might be brought down to the level of my vitals. But the eye did not flash. The gun swayed only with his footfalls, and we continued our mechanical advance away from each other.

Prudence whispered to me to turn and protect myself from a rear attack, but the message did not affect my legs. I winced momentarily for the expected load of shot in my back, but I walked stiffly as if a great ray of light were penetrating my cerebellum. Exploding Eggs, who knew only about our fight upon the palace balcony and nothing of my having the Browning, was chanting about the god of night, Po, and paid no attention to Peyral, except to say quite audibly, *"Peyralé aoe metai!* Peyral is no good!" That did not add to my surety, and the imagined missile or missiles from behind did not become less vivid until I was beyond shooting distance. Just as I calculated with incredible relief that the crisis was past, Peyral's gun roared out.

My muscles squirmed, my heart leaped, my knees bent, and my chin touched my bosom. Exploding Eggs laughed.

"Peyralé puhi kuku," he said regretfully; "Peyral has shot a *kuku*"—as if I should have shot it. I laughed heartily with him. The joke was on me, but I enjoyed it to the echo. I recalled that often of an evening my enemy replenished his larder with an expenditure of Number Four shot. It was funny, and when I reached the palace I was trembling with the reverberations of the absurd climax to my fears.

L'Hermier des Plantes was dancing opposite Many Daughters a-*hura-hura,* and Song of the Nightingale was fetching cold water from the brook to water the wine, in the temperate French way.

"Hola!" called out the governor. "Come in, *mon ami!* Sit down and have a *goutte de Pernod.* You are jolly. What? You met Peyral, and he shot not you but a *kuku? O lalala!* You give me back the Browning? All right. You could not have done much harm with it. See, the cartridges are blanks for firing a salute on the Fall of the Bastille *fête. O sapristi!* It is droll! I will die!"

He held his stomach while he laughed and laughed. I grinned with fury.

"What the devil is the *drôlerie?"* I questioned, earnestly.

The governor wiped his eyes, and emptied his glass.

"Attendez!" he answered. You were not in any great danger or I would have come to your rescue. You know I have here a *dossier* of every one in these islands who has been complained against, or has complained. The first week I was here Peyral declared that *Commissaire* Bauda had insulted his daughter, and that he must marry her or he would kill him. Bauda denied the charge, and Peyral did nothing. Then I opened his *dossier,* and in two years he had made three such charges, one against a professor who was here a month, and one against Le Brunnec. *C'est curieux.* The man is mad with alcohol, but more so with a determination to marry that stark daughter of his to a white man who might take her away. Others have been eliminated after such foolishness as this. See, there was no

one but you. Lutz is after higher game, and besides he is a German, and Peyral hates him. *Voilà, mon garçon.* You were the *parti* inevitable. It is strange the way he goes about getting a son-in-law. One might expect a *dot,* or a little hospitality, but no, he runs true to type, and he is not a *chic* type. But, *c'est fini.* He has tried and failed. You have met him, and knocked him down, and now you know his gun is for *kuku.* Well, we will drink to the health of the *pauvre diable,* and a good husband for the girl. But not you, eh?"

I drank with as much grace as I could, but when I walked in the upper valley at dusk, and was alone by the *paepae tapu,* the shattered and grown-over temple of the old Marquesan gods, I could have cried for pity for that girl.

CHAPTER XVI

In the valley of Vaitahu—With Vanquished Often and Seventh Man He Is So Angry He wallows in the Mire—Worship of beauty in the South Seas—Like the ancient Greeks—Care of the body—Preparations for a belle's début—Massage as a cure for ills.

ACROSS the Bordelaise Channel from Atuona, many hours of sailing in an outrigger canoe, lay the island of Tahuata. Its principal settlement was Vaitahu, and there I went with Exploding Eggs, my adopted brother of fourteen, to stay awhile in the house of the chief, Seventh Man Who Is So Angry He Wallows in the Mire, as Neo Efitu, his short name, meant. Atuona personified the brooding spirit of melancholy that possessed the race, the shadow of the white upon the Marquesan spirit, but Vaihatu had as *genus loci* a blithe and domestic sprite, which had kept the tiny village—formerly of thousands—in the habits and moods of the old ways. Waited on as an honored guest by the chief, his wife, and his niece, Vanquished Often, the friend and playmate of the few score inhabitants, I had happy weeks of simple pleasures, and of intense interest in searching into the past of the Marquesans, and especially into their customs and manners in relation to esthetics.

The only foreigner in the valley, by my earnest wish and laughable example, life resumed for a time much of the old Marquesan method and appearance. The mission church, the first Christian edifice within a thousand miles, was rejoining the wilderness. Without

clergy or adherent, its walls were fast falling into decay, and its precisely-planned garden was jungle. The artist-schoolmaster, Le Moine, who had taught Vaitahu's children to say, "*La France est le plus bon pays du monde,*" was gone to seek other models for painting as ravishing as Vanquished Often, or men as majestic as Kahuiti, the cannibal of Taaoa. Existence, almost as devoid of invention and artificiality as before the white came, I was able to rebuild in my mind the structure of Marquesan taste, and to view in imagination the attractive aspect of Vaitahu in its idyllic days of old. We brought out of the chests the native garments of *tapa,* and we lived as much as possible—like children playing Indians—a perspective of the past.

I looked from my mat upon the *paepae* of Seventh Man Who Wallows to see Vanquished Often by the *Vai Puna,* the spring of Vaitahu. She had taken off her *ahu* or tunic of pink muslin and bent over to receive the full stream of cool water from the hills which flowed through the bamboo pipes. Her beautiful body, the blood mantling under her silken skin, perfect in development at thirteen years, glowed in the dazzling light and under the silvery cascade, and her long, unconfined hair shone red-gold in the sunbeams. My mind reverted to the descriptions of the women, the men, and the scenes described by these who voyaged here decades ago.

Not any people in all the world, ancient or modern, ranked human beauty higher in the list of life's gifts than did the people of these islands. In the star-scattered archipelagos of the Pacific tropics a dozen tawny races or breeds of superb physical endowment made their bodies wondrous temples for their free souls. The

Photo by Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

Some friends in my valley

Wash-day in the stream by my cabin

loveliness and grace of women, the symmetry and strength of men, were, before the white came to destroy them, the fascinating labor of their days, their vivid religion, and the expression of their joy of living.

They brought the culture of beauty and the rhythm of motion to an unequaled perfection, and in the adornment of their bodies and development of their natural attractions reached a pitch of splendor and artistry which, though seeming savage to us of this period, struck beholders, even of our kind, as entrancing and marvelous.

While all over Polynesia these conditions obtained when the first Anglo-Saxons threw down the anchors of their ships in the enchanting harbors of these tropics, they remained longest in the Marquesas Archipelago.

In their simple dress, their practice of manipulation in the development of their bodies, their use of scents, unguents, and lotions, their wearing of flowers and ornaments, their singular and astounding art of the story-teller, the dance and the pantomime, and the exquisite tattooing of their persons, they showed a delicacy of feeling and an understanding of elegance unsurpassed in the records of the nations of the earth.

As I sat under the *pandanus* thatch of Seventh Man Who Is So Angry He Wallows in the Mire, I recalled what that eminent moralizer, Lecky, had said:

> The intense esthetic enthusiasm that prevailed was eminently fitted to raise the most beautiful to honor. In a land and beneath a sky where natural beauty developed to the highest point, supreme physical perfection was crowned by an assembled people. In no other period of the world's history was the admiration of beauty in all its forms so passionate or so universal.

It colored the whole moral teaching of the time, and led the chief moralists to regard virtue simply as the highest kind of supersensual beauty. It led the wife to pray, before all other prayers, for the beauty of her children. The courtesan was often the queen of beauty.

Lecky wrote that of ancient Greece to contrast it with the morals of the Europe of his day, but I considered the striking likeness between the condition he described and the attitude of the ancient Marquesans. Here in these tiny islands, separated by ten thousand miles of billow from the land of Pericles and Aspasia, a people whose origin was only guessed at by science, erected the same goal of attainment, and like standards of harmony of form and movement. Doubtless at that very day these Greeks of the tropics, considering their environment, most distant from the birthplace of humanity and from the example of other peoples, were comparable in brilliancy of person and ease of motion to the Homeric figures.

The American sea-fighter, Captain David Porter, who ran up the Stars and Stripes in the breadfruit groves of these islands, said:

The men of the Marquesas are remarkably handsome, of large stature and well-proportioned; they possess every variety of countenance and feature, and a great difference is observable in the color of the skin, which for the most part is of a copper color. But some are as fair as the generality of working people much exposed to the sun of a warm climate.

The young girls were handsome and well-formed; their skins were remarkably soft and smooth and their complexions no darker than many brunettes in America, celebrated for their beauty. Their modesty was more evident than that of the

women of any place we had visited since leaving our own country; and if they suffered themselves (though with apparent timidity and reluctance) to be presented naked to strangers, may it not be in compliance with a custom which taught them to sacrifice to hospitality all that is most estimable?

Why, and how had this strange race, so far from others' strivings, attained so singular a state of natural beauty that discoverer after discoverer and diarist after diarist, from the bloody Spaniard, Mendaña, to the gentle Louis Stevenson, set it down as the "handsomest on earth?"

One must guess at the beginnings of the Marquesans. Scientists make explorations to find the route of the Caucasian people who thousands of years ago—maybe, before the Hebrews deserted Jehovah for Baal-Peor —migrated through the unknown and fearsome wastes of ocean toward these misty islands of the far south. What equipment of body and soul they brought with them we do not know, but they were or became the masters of their seas, and in their frail canoes dared even the long voyage to New Zealand and to Hawaii, when Europeans and Asiatics in keeled ships crept carefully about their own coasts, or crossed the Mediterranean Sea only within the threatening Pillars of Hercules.

During the thousands of years the Marquesans were separated from Europe they developed a policy of government, a paternalistic democracy, or communism, which was perfectly adapted to their nature and surroundings. A very large part of it was concerned with beauty, manners, and entertainment, with personal decoration, carving of stone and wood, building of temples and houses, oratory, dances, and chants. All

of these were carefully regulated by cults, gilds, and *tapus*. They must have been an extremely prolonged growth, for they had come to a fixed standard of detail and exactness, and an acme of art, bizarre and exotic as it was, that could have been but the minute accretion of many centuries. When the first explorers came into the uncharted spaces of these warm seas, they found a culture totally beyond the understanding of most of them, and abhorrent to state and church, but which a few fine souls glimpsed as an astonishing revelation of the natural development of the human, and, by foil, of the decadence of civilization. They found health and high spirits abounding to a degree utterly strange to them, the hardiest and most adventurous of Europeans and Americans, and they were provoked by the innocence, radiance, and naturalness of the women.

This Edenic condition astounded the Yankee Porter, who went to sea at sixteen, and who slew scores of Marquesans, for he put in his log:

> The Hawaiians, Tahitians, and New Zealanders had by residence among whites become corrupt; they had fallen into their vices and ate the same food. They were no longer in a state of nature; they had, like us, become corrupt, and while the honest, guileless faces of the Marquesans shone with benevolence, good nature and intelligence, the downcast eye and sullen look of the others marked their inferiority and degeneracy. Guilt, of which by intercourse with us they had become sensible, had already marked their countenances. Every emanation of their souls could not be perceived upon their countenances as with those of the naked Marquesans.

War, murder, mutiny, desertion, and horrible orgies

marked the reaction of these forecastle denizens, scourings of slums and dull villages, to the spontaneity, ease, and liberty they found here, in contrast with their ugly and restricted lives aboard ship or in the hard climes and rough grooves of their homes. The sight of such intense individual happiness, glowing vitality, and exquisite bodies, of a coöperative existence without kings or commoners, business or money, palaces or hovels, disease or dirt, prudery or prostitutes, shocked them by the abrupt differences from their own countries. They wrote the Marquesans down as barbarians, as the Greeks did the Romans; and church, government, and trade made haste to hack down their achievement, and to make over the pieces as the wretched patchwork of their own hands. They hated it, subconsciously, for its giving the lie to their own boasted institutions. They ended it that it might not mock the degradation and futility of their own conduct and the opposition between their decalogue and their deeds. The merchant condemned and altered it to make a market for what it did not then need or desire.

The first approach to change after subjugation and conversion was through clothing, because the most obvious difference between the whites and the browns was that the latter largely exposed their bodies. The missionary paved the way for the dealer who had cottons to sell by saying that God abhorred nakedness. Livingston himself acted likewise. The Marquesans, in truth, had a small variety of clothing. Much of the time both sexes wore only the single garment, the *pareu* or loin-cloth. Their clothes of *Tapa* or bark were, except mattings, the only stuffs made by the Marquesans.

They were of a remarkable texture and coloring, considering the materials available. The inner barks of the banian, breadfruit, and particularly the mulberry trees were used. The outer rind was scraped off with a shell, and the inner slightly beaten and allowed to ferment. It was then beaten over wooden forms with clubs of ironwood about eighteen inches long, grooved coarsely on one side and finely on the reverse, a process that united so closely the fibers that in the finished cloth one could not guess the processes of its making. Bleached in the sun on the beaches to a dazzling white, this fabric was either dyed black or brown, yellow or red, or fashioned as it was into the few varieties of garments they affected. All wore the *pareu* about the loins; a strip two yards or more in length, and a yard wide, which is passed twice about the waist and tucked in for holding, as the sarong of the Malay. It hangs above the knees, and like the *fundoshi* of Japan, worn by royalty and beggar, is capable, for strenuous movements, such as swimming, of being gathered up to form a diaper or breech-cloth.

The *cahu* or *ahu,* a long and flowing piece of *tapa,* was worn by the females, hanging from the shoulders, knotted about or covering one or both breasts at the whim of the wearer. For the coloring of this and the *pareu,* rich and alluring dyes were found in the plants and trees and even the sea-animals of the beaches. The outlines of the hibiscus flowers and carven objects were imprinted upon these tapas, and astronomical, mystic, or tribal signs or records drawn upon them in fantastic but artistic design.

The method of wearing the *cahu* for hiding or dis-

closing the charms of the female was as varied as the *toilettes* of Parisian fashion. The conceit of the girl or woman, the occasion, and the weather decided its being draped in any one of a score of manners. A belle might think it ungenerous to cover too much, and an old or homely woman find the entire surface too scant. When human nature has freest fling, prudery is the fig-leaf of ugliness, here, as in the salon of Mayfair, or behind the footlights of Broadway.

For the men, while the *pareu,* always as now, was the common apparel, they had a hundred ornaments, in a diversity more numerable than those of the females. Whenever man has not sacrificed his masculine craving for adornment to religious or economic pressure, he is the gaudier of the sexes. From the fiddler-crab with his rampant claw to the mandrill with his crimson and lilac callosities, nature has so ordained it, and man rejoiced in his privilege. Not until European man felt the iron hand of the machine age, when the rifle displaced the bow and the pistol the sword, the factory the home loom, and the foundry the smithy; not until money became the chief pursuit of all ranks, and puritanism a general blight upon brilliancy of costume, did the white man relinquish his gewgaws to the parasitic woman. Then he made it a vicarious pride by decorating her with his riches and making her the vehicle of his pomp in ornature, and the advertisement of his prosperity.

The Marquesans, struck by the glitter of brass buttons and gold braid, of broadcloth and fur, unfamiliar with metal, and admiring everything foreign, fell facile victims to vestures, and when the new-fangled religions that followed hot upon the discoverers, enforced cover-

ing by dogma and even by punishment, they clothed themselves and sweated in fashion and sanctity. But clothes irk the Marquesans as they do all people living close to a kindly nature. Our own babes resent even the swaddles which bind them in the cradle. The first years of childhood are a continuing struggle against garments, until, having lost plasticity and the instant response of muscle to mind that distinguishes the Marquesans, the result is rationalized by adolescents into modesty and convention. After youth, clothing is welcomed by us to enhance imperfect charms and to hide defects, to screen our unhandsome and puny bodies. The lean shanks, protuberant abdomens, and anatomical grotesqueries in a public bath bear witness to our sacrifice. Marriage is often a disclosure of unguessed flaws.

"The gods are naked and in the open," said Seneca.

Pigalle sculptured the frail old Voltaire in the nude, yet attained dignity. Even Broadway smiles at frocked heroes in bronze, and must have its ideals in marble or bronze undraped.

How often, when I lived at the spacious home of my friend, Ariioehau Ameroearao, the chief at Mataiea in Tahiti, I have seen him, chevalier of the Legion of Honor, come in from the highway in stiff white linen or in religious black, and in a twinkling reduce his garb to a loin-cloth!

His walls were hung with portraits of princes and distinguished travelers, guests of his in the past score of years, and none was more distinguished, though in brilliant uniform and gorgeously decorated, than the old chief in his strip of cotton print.

"Three kings naked have I seen, and never a sign of royalty," said the cynical Bismarck.

Plato understood very well the spirit in which the Polynesians were clothed by the whites, the crass prurience that pointed out to them the wickedness of nudity, that hid their beautiful bodies under tunics and pantaloons, that laughed at their simplicity.

In the "Republic" he says:

> Not long since it was thought discreditable and ridiculous among the Greeks, as it is now among most barbarian nations, for men to be seen naked. And when the Cretans first, and after them the Lacedæmonians, began the practice of gymnastic exercises, the wits of the time had it in their power to make sport of those novelties. But when experience has shown that it was better to strip than to cover up the body and when the ridiculous effect that this plan had to the eye had given way before the arguments establishing its superiority, it was at the same time, as I imagine, demonstrated that he is a fool who thinks anything ridiculous but that which is evil, and who attempts to raise a laugh by assuming any object to be ridiculous but that which is unwise and evil.

The Marquesans, perfect animals, had their senses extraordinarily attuned to the faintest vibrations of value to their survival or delight. They heard sounds plainly that I, with rather better than ordinary civilized hearing, did not catch. I was with Vanquished Often when she spoke to Exploding Eggs two hundred feet away in a conversational tone. I tested them, and found they could talk with each other intelligibly when I heard but an indistinct whisper from the farthest. So with smell. Ghost Girl and Mouth of God, my neighbor at Atuona, could detect any intimates by their

odor in pitch darkness at twenty feet, though Marquesans, because they have little bodily hair and are the cleanest people I know, have less personal odor than we. They enjoyed life through scent infinitely more than do we. They had no kisses but rubbed noses and smelled each other with indrawings of their breath. Odoriferous herbs, flowers, and seeds were continually about their necks, both men and women, tucked behind their ears, or in their hair, and their bodies after bathings were anointed with the *hinano*-scented cocoanut-oil. Their noses were sources of sensuous enjoyment to them beyond my capability. They inhaled emanations from flowers too subtle to touch my olfactory nerves.

The Marquesan woman has ever been an arch-coquette, paying infinite attention to her appearance, and enduring pain and *ennui* to improve her beauty. Her complexion was as much a pride as with a fashionable American woman to-day. The beauty parlors of our cities were matched by the steam baths, the use of saffron, of oils, and of massage, and by weeks or even months of preparation before some great festival. To burst upon the assembled clan, white as the sea-foam, with skin as smooth as a polished calabash, hair oiled and wreathed, and body rounded from dancing practice and much sleep, and to set beating wildly the pulses of the young men, so that, strive as they might to remain mute, they would be forced to yield mad plaudits, was a result worth months of effort. To be the belle of the ball was a distinction a woman remembered a lifetime. It was an honor comparable to the warrior's wounds, or possession of the heads of the enemies. Parents felt keenly the success of their daughters. Titihuti and

others have told me of their triumphs, as Bernhardt or Patti might recite of packed houses and a score of encores.

A curious secrecy or modesty was attached to the making of the toilet and the enhancement of the natural charms. No Marquesan or Tahitian or Hawaiian would ever have looked at herself in a portable mirror—if she had one—as do many of our females, and the whitening and reddening of cheeks and lips in public places would have caused a blush of shame for her sex to suffuse the face of a Marquesan, to whom such intimate gestures were for the privacy of her home or the bank of the limpid stream in a grove dedicated to the Marquesan Venus.

Near Tahiti was the atoll of Tetuaroa where for hundreds of years the belles of Tahiti resorted to lose their sunburn in the bowered groves and to spend a season in beautification by banting, special foods, dancing, swimming, massage, baths, oils, and lotions.

Here in the Marquesas, as in all Polynesia, a period of voluntary seclusion preceded the début of the maiden, or the preparation for a special *pas seul* by a noted beauty.

Seclusion of the girl was practiced at the time of puberty. It has a curious analogy in such far separated places as Torres Straits and British Columbia, one Australasia and the other North America. The girls of a tribe in Torres Straits are hidden for three months behind a circle of bushes in their parent's house at the first signs of womanhood. No sun must reach them, and no man, even though he be the father, enter the house, nor must they feed themselves. The Nootkas of British

Columbia also conceal their nubile virgins, and insist that they touch their own bodies for a period only with a comb or a bone, never laying their hands upon it.

It would seem that all this mystery had the same purpose, that of adding to the attractiveness of the girls and heightening the romance of their new condition. Our coming-out parties parallel the goal of these strange peoples, announcements, formal introductions, as brilliant as possible, being considered desirable both among savages and ourselves to give notice of a marriageable state. Our débuts have not departed far from aboriginal ideas.

The Junoesque wife of Seventh Man Who Wallows had just come from the *via puna* in her accustomed bathing attire, and, still dripping, seated herself in the sun near me to dry. She had added a jasmine blossom to the heavy gold hoops in her ears and had lit her pipe, and her handsome, large face was twisted between smiles and frowns as she tried to put in understandable words and gestures her recital of these customs:

"Our girls, daughters of chiefs, such as I am, were kept hidden for months before we appeared for the first time in public in the tribal dance. The *tapu* was strict. We were secret in our mother's house and inclosure, without supposedly even being seen by any one but our relatives and their retainers. It was death to gaze upon us. We were *tapu tapu.* If we had cause to go out, our official guardian blew a conch-shell to warn all from the neighborhood. Not until the day of the dance or marriage ceremony, not until the feast was spread and the accepted suitor present to claim us, or the drums booming for the dance, were we shown to the multitude;

we had had months of *omi omi,* and would be in perfect condition and most beautiful."

It was this *omi omi,* or massage, that many of the earlier chroniclers of the South Seas believed to be the cause of the chiefs and headmen of all these islands being much bigger and handsomer than the common people. The *hakaiki,* or chiefs, men and women, throughout Polynesia astonished the voyagers and missionaries by their huge size. Often they were from four to six inches above six feet tall, and framed in proportion. Hardly a writing sailor or visitor to Hawaii, Tahiti, Samoa, or the Marquesas but remarks this striking fact. Many thought these headmen a different race than the others, but scientists know that family, food, and the curious effect of the strenuous massage from infancy account for the differences. The *omi omi* of these islands, the *tarumi* of Tahiti, and the *lomi lomi* of the Hawaiians all have a relation to the *momi-ryoji,* practiced by the tens of thousands of whistling blind itinerants throughout Japan.

I had a remarkable illustration of the curative merits of *omi omi* when, having bruised my back by awkwardness in sliding down a rocky waterfall into a once tabooed pool with Vanquished Often and Exploding Eggs, I submitted myself to the ministrations of Juno and Vanquished Often. They would have me in the glare of the early morning sun on Seventh Man's *pae-pae,* and there were gales of laughter as they shouted out my physical differences from the Marquesans, my excellences, and my blemishes. On one side and on the other, both squatted, they handled me as if they understood the locations of each muscle and nerve. They

pinched and pulled, pressed and hammered, and otherwise took hold of and struck me, but all with a most remarkable skill and seeming exact knowledge of their method and its results. I was in agony over their treatment of me, but after a day as well as ever.

Before I was given the *omi omi,* I was bathed by the two ladies with a care and nicety not to be bought at our best hammams. A tiny penthouse was made quickly of cocoanut-leaves, and in this was placed a great wooden trencher of water in which white hot stones were dropped. On a tiny stool I sat in the resulting steam, the delicious odor of *kakaa* leaves thrown into the boiling water aiding the vapor in effect on skin and nerves. Quite ten minutes I was compelled to remain in the penthouse, my fair jailers remaining obdurate outside despite my imploring cries to be released, my protestations that I was being dissolved and would emerge a thing of shreds and patches. When I could not have stood it another second, my lungs bursting with restraint, and my body hot enough to hurt my nervously caressing hands, I was suddenly let out and hurried to the beach, where Vanquished Often rushed with me into the beating surf.

The sea seemed cold as an Adirondack lake, and I was for swimming beyond the breakers in fullest enjoyment of the relief, but my doctors would not allow me another minute and hand in hand rushed me to the chief's *pae-pae,* now my own, for my lenitive kneading. The bruises I had got in my awkward essay to emulate the agility of Exploding Eggs and Vanquished Often were deep and painful, but after half an hour of their pounding I fell asleep and remained unconscious six hours.

I was to myself a celestial musical instrument, a human xylophone, from which houris struck notes that made the stars whirl, and to the music of which Vanquished Often danced in the purple moonlight upon a milky cloud. Their cessation of the *omi omi* woke me. It was past noon when I joined them and the whole merry populace of Vaitahu in the warm ocean waves. I was without pain or stiffness, and reborn to a childhood I had forgotten.

CHAPTER XVII

Skilled tattooers of Marquesas Islands a generation ago—Entire bodies covered with intricate tattooed designs—The foreigner who had himself tattooed to win the favor of a Marquesan beauty—The magic that removed the markings when he was recalled to his former life in England.

TATTOOING, the marking of designs on the human skin in life, is an art so old that its beginnings are lost to records. It was practised when the Neolithic brute went out to club his fellows and drag in his body to the fire his mate kept ever burning. Its origin, perhaps, was contemporaneous with vanity, and that was in the heart of man before he branched from the missing limb of evolution. It perhaps followed in the procession of art the rude scratchings on bone and daubing on rock. In the caves of Europe with these childish distortions are found the implements with which the savage whites who lived in the recesses of the rocks tattooed their bodies. The Jews were forbidden by Moses to tattoo themselves, and the Arabs, with whom they had much converse, yet practise it. In 1066 William of Malmesbury said that the English "adorned their skins with punctured designs." Kingsley, with regard for accuracy, makes *Hereward the Wake*, son of the *Lady Godiva*, have blue tattooing marks on wrists, throat, and knee; a cross on his throat and a bear on the back of his hand. The Romans found the Britons stained with woad. The taste for such

From an old drawing

Te Ipu, an old Marquesan chief, showing tattooing

The famous tattooed leg of Queen Vaikehu

marks existing to-day is evidenced by the pain and price paid by sailors and aristocrats of all white nations for them. Tattooing has faded under clothing which covers it and a less personal civilization which condemns it. In the Marquesas Islands it reached its highest development, and here was the most beautiful form of art known to the most perfect physical people on earth.

Until the overthrow of Marquesan culture, the island of Fatu-hiva was the Florence of the South Seas. The most skillful workers at tattooing as well as carving lived in its valleys of Oomoa and Hanavave. During the weeks I have resided in them I delved into the history and curiosities of this most intimate of fine arts, now expiring if not dead. Nataro, the most learned Marquesan alive, took me into its intricacies and made me know it for the proud, realistic performance it was, a dry-point etching on a growing plate from which no prints were to be made. Nataro's wife had one hand that is as famous and as admired in Fatu-hiva as "Mona Lisa's" portrait in Paris. A famous *tuhuka* wrought its design, a man equal in graphic genius, relatively, to Dürer or Rembrandt. Age and work had faded and wrinkled the picture, but I can believe her husband that, as a young woman, when the art was not cried down, people came from far valleys to view it. I recalled the right leg of the late Queen Vaekehu, the most notable piece of art in all the Marquesas until it went with its possessor into the grave at Tai-o-hae. In late years the former queen of cannibals and last monarch of the Marquesas would not show her limb—a modest attitude for a recluse who lived with nuns and thought only of death. Stevenson confessed he never saw it above the

ankle, though the queen dined with him on the Casco. He had a poet's delicacy, an absolute lack of curiosity, and Mrs. Stevenson was with him. But he expressed a real sympathy for the iconoclastic ignorance that was destroying tattooing here.

The queen, who had been the prize of bloody feuds and had danced at the feast of "long pig," had gone to her reward after years of beseechment of the Christian God for mercy, but I could almost see her once glorious leg in the life because of the two of my Atuona mother, Titihuti, which for months have passed my hut daily. They are replicas of the Queen's, said Nataro, with the difference that Titihuti's, beginning at her toe nails, reached a gorgeous cincture at her waist, while Vaekehu's did not reach her hip, being, indeed, a permanent stocking. Some of the Easter Island women had an imitation of drawers delineated upon them, giving weight to the theory that these perpetuated the idea of clothing they wore in a colder clime, but of which they had preserved not even a legend.

Women were seldom tattooed above the waist, except their hands, and fine lines about the mouth and upon the insides of the lips. This lip-coloring was, doubtless, the efforts of invaders to make the red lips of the Caucasian women, the first Polynesian immigrants, conform to the invaders' inherited standards, as the Manchus put the queue on the Chinese. The Marquesan men like dark men. The last conquerors here were probably a darker race than the conquered, and they preserved their ideals of color, but, having come without women and seized the women they found, they let them preserve their own standards, except for red lips, which

they tattooed blue. These latest comers thought much pigment meant strong bones, and after a battle they searched the field for the darkest bodies to furnish fish-hooks and tools for canoe-making and carving. They thought the whites who first arrived were gods, and when they found they were men, with their same passions, they thought they were ill. That is the first impression one who lives long with Polynesians has when he meets a group of whites. They look sickly, sharp-faced, and worried. They pay dear for factories and wheeled vehicles.

Very probably the beginning of tattooing was the wish to frighten one's enemy, as masks were worn by many tribes, and as the American painted his face with ocher. That state was followed by the natural desire of the warrior, as evident yet as in Hector's day, to look manly and individualistic before the maidens of his tribe. And finally, as heraldry became complicated, tattooing grew, at least in Polynesia, into a record of sept and individual accomplishments and distinguishing marks. Here it had, as an art, freed itself from the bonds of religion, so that the artist had liberty to draw the Thing as he saw it, and had not to conform to priest-craft, a rule which probably hurt Egyptian art greatly.

In New Zealand, where the Polynesians went from Samoa, a sometime rigorous climate demanded clothing, and the head became the *pièce de résistance* of the tattooer. There was a considerable trade among whites in the preserved heads of New Zealanders until the supply ran out. White dealers procured the raiding of villages to sell their victim's visages. Museums and collectors of such curios paid well for these tattooed faces, but the

demand exhausted the best efforts of the whites. After the rarest examples were dead and smoked, there was no stimulating the supply. The goods refused to be manufactured. The Solomon Islands now supply smoked human heads, but they have no adornment.

Birds, fish, temples, trees, and plants—all the cosmos of the Marquesan—was a model for the *tuhuka.* He often drew his designs in charcoal on the skin, but sometimes proceeded with his inking *sans* pattern. He never copied, but drew from memory, though the same lines and tableaux might be repeated a thousand times; and always he bore in mind the caste, tribe, and sex of the subject. Thus at a glance one could tell the valley and rank of any one, much as in Japan the station, age, moral standing, and other artificial qualities of women are indicated by their coiffure and *obi,* or sash.

The craft did not require any elaborate tools. The *ama* or candlenut soot with water, a graduated set of bone-needles, of human and pig origin, and a mallet were all the requirements. The paint or ink was of but one color, black or brown, which on a dark skin looked bluish and on a fair skin black. The marking of the parts most delicate and sensitive to pain, as the eyelids, was a parcel of the endeavor to promote stoicism and to show the foe the mettle of his opponent. Man did not consent for thousands of years to share his ornamentation with women, and then insisted that the *motif* be beauty or the accentuation of sex.

The tattooers, in order to learn from one another, to have art chats, to discuss prices and perhaps dead beats or slow payers, had societies or unions, in which were degrees and offices, the most favored in ability and by

patronage being given the highest rank, though now and again a white man, by his superior magic and force, though no *tuhuka* at all, held the supreme position.

A shark upon the forehead was the card of membership in the tattooers' lodge, to which were admitted occasionally enthusiastic and discerning patrons of art.

At festival times, when *tapus* were to some degree suspended and the intertribal enmities forgotten for the nonce, thousands of men, women, and children gathered to eat, drink, and be merry, and to be tattooed, as one at country fairs buys new dresses and trinkets. It was to these *fêtes* that the pot-boilers, fakers, and beginners among the talent came; men who would make a sitter a scrawl for a heap of *pipi,* shells and gewgaws, a few squealing pigs, a roll of tapa, or, most precious of all, a whale's tooth. Like our second- and third-class painters, our wretched daubers who turn out canvases by the foot (though hand-painted), these tramps, who, by a dispensation of the priests and a mocking providence, were *tapu,* not to be attacked in any valley, strolled from tribe to tribe, promising much and giving little. Some worked largely on repair jobs, doing over spots where the skin had been abraded by injuries in battles, or by rocks or fire. The man who was well dressed in a suit of tattoo, or the lady who was clothed from toes to waist in a washable *peau de femme,* kept these garments in as good condition as possible, but when accident or the fortune of war injured the *ensemble* they hastened to have it touched up.

An artist of the first rank, one who in a Marquesan salon would have a medal of honor, disdained such commissions, but dauber and South Sea Da Vinci alike

often had their work hung upon the line, when they were taken by the enemy and suspended at the High Place before being dropped into the pit for the banquets of the cannibal victors.

It was always of interest to me to wonder how men learned tattooing. Painters, carvers, etchers, and sculptors have material ever available for their lessons. They can waste an infinity of canvas, wood, copper, or marble if they have the money to spend, but how about the apprentice or student who must have live mediums even for practice?

Well, just as there are Chinese who, for a consideration, take the place of persons condemned to death (though they do not, as alleged, make a living out of it), and others who, though it exhaust and finally kill them, enter deadly trades or hire out for war, there were Marquesans who offered themselves as kit-cats for these students and sold their surface at so much an inch for any vile design or miserable execution. I can see these fellows, well covered with *tapa,* hiding whenever possible the caricatures and travesties that made them a laughing show. These Hessians had no pride in complexion. Their skins they wanted full of food, nor cared at all for their outside if the inside man was replete.

There were others who, too poor to pay even the itinerant wall-painters, let the students wreak their worst upon them, merely to be tattooed, good or bad, and many of these, like our millionaire picture buyers, were luckily denied any appreciation of art and did not know the imperfections of the *skin* pictures put upon them.

"Tattooing in these islands," said Nataro, "was usu-

ally begun upon those able to pay for it at the age of puberty; but there were many exceptions of tattooing commenced upon boys soon after their infancy or deferred until mature manhood. Illness, poverty, or other obstacle might prevent, and the desire of parents might cause early tattooing. The father or other relative or protector of the youth or girl paid the *tuhuka* but at the festivals even the very poor orphans were given opportunities to be tattooed by a general contribution, or the chief of the valley paid the fee. Years were occupied at intervals in the covering of the entire body of men, which was the aim; but many had to be content with having a part pictured, and often elaborate designs were never finished. You see many bare places, meant to be covered when the *tuhuka* began his work. Queen Vaekehu was converted to Christianity with but one leg done and forewent further beautification to serve her new God. Though begun in boyhood, the full adornment of a man could hardly be terminated before his thirtieth year. During his lifetime of sixty years he might have it renewed twice, and as each pore could not be duplicated exactly the third coat would make him a solid mass of color, the goal of manly beauty.

"Though men usually sought to look terrible so that when they faced their enemies they would inspire fear, with women the sex *motif* was dominant," said Nataro. "Girls with beautiful bodies and legs are much more attractive when tattooed, and we selected the best formed for the most elaborate designs. These were drawn so that, as the girls danced naked, the whole patterns were obvious, and those who were the most symmetrical won high honors in the great public exhibitions.

If in the wide circle that chanted a *utanui,* while the old folks watched, a woman by exposing her beauty in a dance caused the voices of the young men to falter, or some one of them to become so entranced as to leap into the ring and seize her, she won a prize of acclamation for her parents which no other equaled. The dance stopped and all united in cheering the dancer. These beauties danced with their legs close together, so as to keep the design intact, lifting the heels backward and showing the shapeliness of figure and the fineness of tattooing."

To analyze thoroughly the meanings of the different designs upon the bodies of the Maoris, or upon the canoes, paddles, and bowls, was impossible now. It might be compared to the study of heraldry. Tattooing in the South Seas was a combination of art and heraldry, racial and individual pride's sole written or graven record.

In the Marquesas, the art reached its zenith. It was the Marquesans' national expression, their art, their proof of Spartan courage, the badge of the warrior, and the glory of sex. In the man it marked ambition to meet the enemy and to win the most beautiful women. In the weaker vessel it was a coquetry, highly developed among daughters of chiefs and women of personal force; and it afforded those who had submitted to the efforts of the best craftsmen opportunities to display their charms in public to the most striking advantage.

Nataro said that when the law against tattooing was enforced here a few years ago a number went to prison rather than obey it, but that when it was abrogated the art was already dead. It is kept alive now, except in

a few cases, only by the placing of names upon the arms of the girls. Many *tuhukas* were still living, but there was little call for their work.

"They were our highest class, next to the chiefs," said Nataro. "We looked up to them as you do to your great. They were fêted and made much of, and their schools were our art centers, teaching besides tattooing, the carving of wood, bowls, canoes, clubs, and paddles. Now we buy tin cans and china plates. Von den Steinen, the German philologist, connected with the Berlin museum, who was here ten years ago, copied every tattoo pattern he saw, and in many he found a relation to Indian or Asiatic and perhaps other hieroglyphics and figures of thousands of years ago."

With the ridiculing of it by the missionaries, who associated it with heathenry, and the making of it a crime by the missionary-directed chiefs of Tahiti, tattooing vanished there almost a hundred years ago, but here the law against it was very recent. The law written by the English Protestant missionaries in Tahiti was as follows:

No person shall mark with tatau, it shall be entirely discontinued. It belongs to ancient evil customs. The man or woman that shall mark with tatau, if it be clearly proved, shall be tried and punished. The punishment shall be this—he shall make a piece of road ten fathoms long for the first marking, twenty for the second; or stone work four fathoms long and two wide; if not this, he shall do some work for the king. This shall be the woman's punishment—she shall make two large mats, one for the king and one for the governor; or four small mats, for the king two, and for the governor two. If not this, native cloth twenty fathoms long and two wide; ten fathoms for the

king and ten for the governor. The man and woman that persist in tatauing themselves successively four or five times, the figures marked shall be destroyed by blacking them over, and the individuals shall be punished as above written.

To achieve a fairly complete picture upon one's body meant many months of intense suffering, the expenditure of wealth, and a decade of years of very gradual progress toward the goal after manhood was attained; but for a man in the former days to lack the Stripes of Terror upon his face, to have a bare countenance, or one not yet marked by the initial strokes of the hammer of the tattooer was to be a poltroon and despised of his tribe.

Such a one must expect to have no apple of love thrown at him, to awaken no passion in womankind, nor ever to find a wife to bear him children. He was as the giaour among the Turks. He had no honor in life or death, no foothold in the ranks of the warriors, or place among the shades of Po.

So when white men were cast by shipwreck in those isles, or fled from duty on whalers or warships, and sought to stay among the Marquesans, they acceded to the honored customs of their hosts, and adopted their facial adornment and often in the course of years their whole bizarre garb. The courage that did not shrink from dwelling among cannibals could not wilt at the blow of the *hama*.

The explorer in the far North, who lets his face become covered with a great growth of hair, when he intends to return to civilization can with a few strokes of a razor be again as before. But once the curious ink

of the tattooer has bitten into the skin, it is there forever. It is like the pits of smallpox; it can never be erased. Through all his life, and into the grave itself, the human canvas must bear the pictures painted by the artist of the needles. It was a chain as strong as steel, riveted on him, that fastened him to these lotus isles. So men of America or Europe did not return to their native land from the Marquesas, but died here. The whorls and lines in the *ama* dye wrote exile forever from the loved ones at home.

Is that wholly true? Had not science or sorcery nepenthe for the afflicted by such a horror—horror if unwanted? Is there not one who has escaped such a fate when life had become fearful under it?

I asked that question of all, and in the valley of Hanavave was answered. I had rowed to Hanavave in the whaleboat of Grelet, and, when he returned to Oomoa, stayed on a month for the fishing with Red Chicken and discussions with *Père* Olivier.

"There is a sorcerer in the hills near here," said the old French priest, thirty-five years there without leaving, "who was said to be the best tattooer on Fatu-hiva. He is still a pagan, and has a wonderful memory. Take some tobacco and a pipe, and go to visit him. He may be in league with the devil, but he is worthy an hour's journey."

Puhi Enata was still vigorous, though very old. The designs upon his face and body were a strange green, the verde antique which the *ama* ink becomes on the flesh of the confirmed *kava* drinker. I greeted him with "Kaoha!" and soon, with the chunk of tobacco beside him and the new pipe lit, I led him to the subject.

The story is not mine but his, and it has all the weird flavor of these exotic gardens of mystery. It is true without question, and I have often thought since of the American concerned in it, and wondered at his after fate.

We were seated, Puhi Enata and I, upon the *paepae* of his home, the platform of huge stones on which all houses in the Land of the War Fleet are built.

In the humid air of that tropic parallel he made pass before me a panorama of fantastic tragedy as real as the life about me, but as astounding and as vivid in its facts and its narration as the recital of a drama of ancient Athens by a master of histrionics. I laughed or shuddered with the incidents of the story. He spoke in his native tongue, and I have given his words as they filtered through the screen of my alien mind, not always exactly, but in consonance with the cast of thought of that far-away and unknown land.

"We had no whites here when he came, this man of your islands. Other valleys had them, but Hanavave, no. Few ships have come to this bay. Tai-o-hae, a day and a night and more distant, they sought for food and water and now for copra, but Hanavave was, as always, lived in by us only. Yet we ever welcomed the *haoe,* the stranger, for he had ways of interest, and often magic greater than ours.

"He came one day on a ship from far, this white man I tell about, and of whom even now I often meditate. He was not of the sea, but on the ship as one who pays to move about over the waters, looking for something of interest. That thing he found here. He brought ashore his guns and powder, his other posses-

sions of wonder, and let the ship go away without him. He had seen Titihuti, and his *koekoe,* his spirit, was set aflame."

I needed no description by the *tuhuka* to bring before me Titihuti, to see that maddening, matchless child-woman, nor to know the desperate plight of a white who fell in love with her. She must have been the Helen of these Pacific Greeks, for men came from other islands to woo her, fought over her, and embroiled tribes in bloody warfare at her whim. Her affairs had been the history of her valley for a brief period, and were immortalized in chants and in legends though she still lived. Many had related to me stories of her beauty, her spell over men, and her wicked pleasure in deceiving them.

She was the daughter of a chief, of a long line of *hakaiki,* of noble mothers and of warriors, and an adept in the marvelous cult of beauty, of sex expression, which to the Marquesan woman was the field of her dearest ambition, the professional stage and the salon of society.

"The day he came to this beach," said the sorcerer, "was the day she first danced in the Grove of the Mei, at the annual gathering of the tribe. All the people of the ship were invited, and not least he who had no duties but his desires, and who brought from the vessel a barrel of rum as his gift to the people. It was as rich as the full moon, as strong as the surf in storm, and in every drop a dream of fortune. It made that foreigner of note at once, and he was given a seat at the *Hurahura,* the Dance of Passion, in which Titihuti for the first time took her place as a woman and an equal of others. She was then thirteen years old, a *moi kanahau,* her form as the bud of the *pahue* flower, her hair red-gold, like the

fish of the lagoon, and her skin as the fresh-opened breadfruit. The Grove of the Mei you have been in, but you cannot imagine that scene. A hundred torches of candlenuts, strung on the spine of the palm-leaf, lit the dancing mead. The grass had been cut to a smoothness, and all the valley was there. As is usual in these annual débuts of our girls, at the height of the breadfruit season, a dozen were allowed to show their beauty and skill. These danced to the music of drums and of hand-clapping and chanting before the entire tribe seated on the grass."

The old man lit the pipe, which had gone out, and puffed out the blue clouds of smoke as if they were recollections of the past.

"Finally, as the custom is, the plaudits of the crowd narrowed the contest to three. Each as she danced appealed for approval, and each had followers. By the judgment of the throng all had retired but three after a first effort. These began the formal *titii e te epo.* This is the dance of love, the dance we Marquesans have ever made the test of the female's fascination.

"Before the first of the three danced, the rum was passed. It was drunk from cups of leaves, and each in turn drew from the cask. It ran through our veins like fire through the *pandanus.* The great drum then sounded the call.

"Tahiatini came from the shadow of the trees. She wore a dress of *tapa,* made from the pith of the mulberry-tree, and as the dance became faster she tossed it off until she moved about quite nude. For this, of course, is part of the test. A hundred men, mostly young, stood and watched her, and watching them were

the judges, the elders of the race, men and women. For, Menike, in the expression, the heat, or the coolness of those standing men was counted the success or failure of the dancer. And they were taught by pride and by the rules of the event to conceal every feeling, as did the warrior who faced the launched spear. They were to be as the stones of the *paepae*.

"Tahiatini passed back into the trees, and Moeo succeeded her. She seemed to feel that Tahiatini had not scored heavily. She danced marvelously for one who had never before been in the Grove of Mei, and the shrewd judges reckoned more than one of the silent hundred who could not restrain from some mark of approval. There was, when she fell back, a shout of praise from the crowd, and the judges conferred while the rum was handed about for the second time.

"Then Titihuti was thrust out from the darkness, and from her first step we realized that a new enchantress had come to torment the warriors. I have lived long, and many of those dances in the Grove of Mei I have seen. Never before or since that night have I known a girl to do what she did. Her *kahu* of *tapa* was as red as the sun when the sea swallows it, and hung over one shoulder, so that her bosom, as white as the ripe cocoanut, gleamed in the light of the burning *ama*.

"Her hair was in two plaits of flame, and the glittering ghost flowers were over her ears. You know she had for months been out of the day and under the hands of those who prepare the dancers. Her body was as rounded as the silken bamboo, and her skin shone with the gloss of ceaseless care.

"She advanced before the silent hundred, moving as

the slow waters of the brook, and as she passed each one she looked into his eyes and challenged him, as the fighting man his enemy. Only she looked love and not hatred. Then she bounded into the center of the line and, casting off her *kahu,* she stood before them, and for the first time bared her beautiful body in the *titii e tè epo,* the Dance of the Naked. She fluttered as a bird a few moments, the bird that seeks a mate, the *kuku* of the valley. On her little saffroned feet she ran about, and the light left her now in brilliancy and now in shadow. She was searching for the way from childhood to womanhood.

"Then the great *pahu,* the war-drum of human skin, was struck by O Nuku, the sea-shells blew loudly, and the *Hurahura* was proclaimed. You know that. Few are the men who resist. Titihuti was as one aided by Veinehae, the Woman Demon. She flung herself into that dance with madness. All her life she and her mother had awaited that moment. If she could tear the hearts of those warriors so that their breasts heaved, their limbs twitched, and their eyes fell before her, her honor was as the winner of a battle. It was the supreme hour of a woman's existence.

"The judges seized the flambeaux and scrutinized closely the faces of the men. First one yielded and then another. Try as they might to be as the rocks of the High Place, they felt the heat and melted. A dozen were told off in the first few minutes of Titihuti's dance, though Tahiatini and Moeo had won but two or three. Faster grew the music, and faster spun about her hips the torso of Titihuti. The judges caught the rhythm. They themselves were convulsed by the spell of the girl.

Photo from Brown Bros

Tattooing at the present day

Photo from Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

My tattooed Marquesan friend

Photo from Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

Easter Islander in head-dress and with dancing-wand

The whole line of the silent hundred was breaking when, as the breadfruit falls from the tree, suddenly sprang upon the mead the foreigner who had come but that day. Though others of the ship tried to hold him, he broke from them, and, clasping Titihuti in his arms, declared that she was his, and that he would defend his capture. The drums were quieted, the judges rushed to the pair, and, for the time of a wave's lapping the beach, spears were seized.

"But the ritual of the rum began, and in the crush about the cask the judges awarded Titihuti the Orchid of the Bird, the reward of the First Dancer. She stood in the light of the now dying torches, and when the foreigner would embrace her and lead her away she turned her laughing eyes toward him and called out so that many heard:

" 'You are without ornament, O Haoe. Cover your face as do Marquesan lovers, or get you back to your island!'

"Then she hurried away to receive the praise and to taste the glory of her achievement among her own family."

The *Taua* took his long knife and with repeated blows hacked off the upper half of a cocoanut to make ready another drink. I had a very vivid idea of the situation he had described. That handsome young man of Europe, belike of wealth, seeking to surrender to his vagrant fancies in this contrasting environment, and finding that among these savages he had position only as his rum bought it with the men, and was without it at all among the women. One could fancy him all afire after that dance of abandon, ready on the instant to yield to

the deepest of all instincts, and surprised, astounded, almost unbelieving at his repulse. He might have learned that such repulse was not even in the manner of the Marquesans, but solely the whim of Titihuti, the beginning of that career of whimsical passion and *insouciance* which carried her fame from island to island and fetched other proud whites from afar to know her favor. He himself had come a long way to be the unwitting victim of the most prankish girl and woman who ever danced a tribe to death and destruction, but who withal was worth more than she who launched the thousand ships to batter Ilium's towers.

"And did he cover his face?" I demanded, hurrying to follow the windings of fate.

"E!" said the sorcerer. "He gained the friendship of chiefs. He let his ship sail away with but a paper with words to his tribe, and he stayed on. He hunted, he swam, and he drank, but he could not touch his nose to the nose of Titihuti, for his nose was naked. Weeks passed, but not his passion. He hovered about her as the great moth seeks the fireflies, but ever she was busied with her pomades and her massage, the *ena* unguent and the baths, the *omi-omi* and the combing of her red-gold tresses. She had set him aflame, but had no alleviation for him.

"And then when the moon was at its height she danced again, this time alone, as the undisputed *vehine haka* of Fatu-hiva. The foreigner sat and gazed, and when Titihuti glided to where he was and, planting her feet a *metero* away, addressed herself to him, he shook with longing. She was perfumed with the jasmine, and about her breasts were rings of those pink orchids of

the mountains. The foreigner felt the warmth of her presence as she posed in the attitudes of love. He bounded to his feet and, clasping her for the second time to him, he shouted that he would be tattooed, he would be a man among men in the Marquesas.

"There was no delay; I myself tattooed him. As always the custom, I took him into the mountains and built the *patiki,* the house for the rite. That is as it should be, for tattooing is of our gods and of our religion before the whites destroyed it. I was and am the master of our arts. I did not sketch out my design upon his skin with burned bamboo, as do some, but struck home the *ama* ink directly. My needles were the bones of one whom I had slain, an enemy of the Oi tribe. I myself gathered the candlenuts and, burning them to powder, mixed that with water and made my color. My mallet, or *hama,* was the shin of another whom I had eaten."

Such a man as Leonardo, who painted "Mona Lisa" and designed a hundred other beautiful things, or Cellini of the book and a vast creation of intricate marvels, would have understood the exactness of that art of tattooing in the Marquesas. Suppose "Mona Lisa" herself, an expanse of her fair back, and not mere linen, bore her picture. What infinite pains! Not more than took the *taua* in such a task. In his mind his plan, he dipped his needle in the *ama* soot, and, placing the point upon a pore of the flesh, he lightly tapped the other extremity of the bone with his *hama* of shin and impressed the sepia into the living skin, for each point of flesh making a stroke.

Followed fever after several hours of frightful an-

guish. The dentist is the ministrant of caresses, his the loved hand of pleasure, compared with the suffering caused to the quivering body by the blows of those needles. A séance of tattooing followed, and several days of sickness. He had not the strength of the natives in the pain, and often he cried out, but yet he signed that the tattooing should go on.

"Across his eyes upon the lids, and from ear to ear, I made a line as wide as two of your teeth, and I crossed lines as wide from the corners of his forehead to the corners of his chin. As he was to be admitted to the Lodge of Tattooers, I put upon his brow the sacred shark as big as Titihuti's hand. I was four moons in all that, and all the time he must lie within his hut, never leaving it or speaking. I handed him food and nursed him between my work. Upon our darker skin the black candlenut ink is, as you know, as blue as the deep waters of the sea, but on him it was black as night, for his flesh was white.

"He was handsome as ever god of war in the High Place, that foreigner, and terrible to behold. His eyes of blue in their black frames were as threatening as the thunders of the ocean, and above the black shark glistened his hair, as yellow as the sands of the shore. A breadfruit season had passed when we descended the mountain, and he was received into the tribe of Hanavave. We called him Tohiki for his splendor, though his name was Villee, as we could say it."

There is a curious quibble in the recital of the Polynesian. He arrives at a crisis of his tale, and avoids it for a piece of wit or an idle remark. Perhaps it is to

pique the listener's interest, to deepen his attention, or it is but the etiquette of the bard.

"Titihuti?" I interposed.

"Tuitui!" he ejaculated. "You put weeds in my mouth. That girl, that Titihuti, had left her *paepae* and vanished. Some said she dwelt with a lover in another valley. Others that she had been captured at night by the men of Oi Valley. It was always our effort to seize the women of other tribes. They made the race stronger. But Titihuti was not in Oi or with a lover. Her love was her beauty, and soon we learned that she was gone into the hills herself to be tattooed. You, American, have seen her legs, and know the full year she gave to those. They are even to-day the *hana metai oko*, the loveliest and most perfect of all living things."

"And Willie, the splendid Tokihi, what said he?"

"Aue! He dashed up and down the valleys seeking her. He offered gifts for her return. He cried and he drank. But the tattooing is *tabu*, and it would have been death to have entered the hut where she was against the wish of the artist. Then he turned on me and cursed me, and often he sat and looked at himself in the pool in the brook by his own *paepae*. That foreigner lost his good heart. No longer was he kind and gentle. It was he who led us against the valley of Oomoa, and with his gun wrought great harm to those people. It was he who was ready to fight at but the drop of a cocoanut upon his roof. He took no women, and he became the fiercest man of Hanavave. When the year had gone, and Titihuti came back, he would not see her in the

dance, though in it she showed her decorative legs for the first time. He cursed her, too, and said she was a sister of the *feki,* the devil-fish. He dwelt among us for several years as one who leads the tribe, but is not of it. Often he but missed death by the breadth of a grain of sand, for he flung himself on the spears, he fought the sea when it was angered, and he drank each night of the *namu,* the wine of the cocoanut flower grown old, until he reeled to his mat as a canoe tossing at the fishing.

"Then one day came a canoe from Tai-o-hae, with words on paper for him from his own people. A ship from his island was there and had sent on the paper. That was a day to remember. There were with the paper *tiki,* those faces of people you make on paper. Villee seized those things, and, running to his *paepae,* he sat him down and began to look them over. He eyed the words, and he put the *tiki* to his lips. Then he lay down upon his mat and wept. For much time he was like a child. He rolled about as if he had been struck in the body by a war-club, and at last he called me. I went to him with a shell of *namu.*

" 'Drink!' I said. 'It will lift you up.'

"He knocked the shell from my hand.

" 'I will drink no more,' he cried. 'My father is dead, and my brother. I am the chief of my tribe. I have land and houses and everything good in my own island, but, alas! I have this!'

"He pointed to the black shark upon his forehead, and then he shouted out harsh words in his own language. I left him, for he was like one from whom the spirit has gone, but who still lives. I thought of the strangeness of tribes. In ours he was a noble and hon-

ored man for that shark, and yet in his own as hateful as the barefaced man here. Man is, as the wind cloud, but a shifting vapor.

"Often, a hundred times, I saw him sitting by the pool and gazing into it as though to wash out by his glances the marks on his countenance. He was as deep in the mire of despair as the victim awaiting the oven. Nature's mirror showed him why he could not leave for his land and his chieftaincy. And, American, for a woman, too. I saw him many times look at that *tiki* and read the words. Maybe he had fled from her in anger. Now he was great among his people, and she called him. Maybe. My own heart was heavy for him when he fixed his eyes on that still water.

"After weeks of melancholy he summoned me one day.

" '*Taua,*' he said, 'is there no magic, no other ink, no bones, that will quit me of this?'

"He swept his hand over his face.

" 'I will give you my gun, my canoe, my coats, and I will send you by the ship barrels of rum and many things of wonder.'

"He took my hand, and the tears followed the lines of the tattooing down his cheeks.

" 'Tokihi,' I replied, 'no man in the Marquesas has ever wanted to take from his skin that which made him great to his race, yet there is a legend that wanders through my stomach. I will consult the lodge. It would be magic, and it may be *tapu.*'

"The next day I found him lying on his *paepae,* his face down. He was a leaf that slowly withers.

" 'Villee,' I said, and rubbed his back, 'there is for

you perhaps happiness yet. I have talked with the wise old men of the lodge.'

"He raised himself, and fixed his dull eyes on me.

" 'One Kihiputona says that the milk of a woman will work the magic. I can not say, for it is with the gods.'

"The foreigner sprang to his feet.

" 'Come, let us lose no time!' he cried. 'It is that or the *eva.*'

"Marquesans, when tired of life, eat the *eva* fruit. I made all ready, and, taking my daughter and her babe, with food, and the things of the tattooing, we again went to the hut in the mountains. Together we built it over, and made all ready for the trial.

" 'Remember, foreigner,' I said, 'this is all before the *Etuá,* the rulers of each one's good and evil. I have never done this, nor even the wisest of us has ought but a faint memory of a memory that once a white man thus was freed to go back to his kin.'

" '*E aha a*—no matter,' he said. 'There is no choice. Begin!'

"I warned him not to utter a word until I released the *tapu.* I made all ready. Then I had him lie down, his head fixed in a bamboo section, and I began the long task."

The sorcerer sighed, and spat through his fingers.

"Two moons he was there, silent. I worked faster than before, because I had no designs to make. I only traced those of the years before. But the suffering was even greater, and when I struck the bone-needles upon his eyelids he groaned through his closed mouth. Every day I worked as long as he could endure. Sometimes he all but died away, but the *omi omi,* the rubbing,

made him again aware, and as I went on I gained hope myself. His own skin was by nature as that of the white orchid, and the weeks in the *patiki* out of the sunlight, with the oil and the saffron, made it as when he was child. The milk was driven into a thousand little holes in the flesh, and by magic it changed the black of *ama* to white. I think some wonder made it do so, but you should know such things. I left the shark until the last, but long before I came to it the gods had spoken. Faded slowly the candlenut soot, and crept out, as the silver-fish in the caves of Hana Hevane, the bright color of that foreigner.

"Many times his eyes, when I let loose the lids, lifted to mine in inquiry, but I was without answer. Yet nearer I felt the day when I would possess that gun and canoe and the barrels of rum.

"It came. A week had gone since I had touched with the needles his face, and most of it he had slept. Now he was round with sleep and food, and one morning when he awoke, I seized him by the hand and said, *'Kaoha!'* The *tapu* was ended; the task was done."

"And he?" I said greedily.

"He was as a man who wakes from a dream of horror. He said not a word, but went with me and with my daughter and the babe down the trail to this village. Here he stole silently to his pool, and, lying down, he looked long into it. Then he made a wild cry as if he had come to a precipice in the dark and been kept from falling to death by the mere gleam of fungus on a tree. He fell back, and for a little while was without mind. Awake again, he rushed about the village clasping each one he met in his arms, rubbing noses with the girls, and

singing queer songs—*himenes to e aave*—of his island. His laughter rang in the groves. Now he was as when he had come to us, gay, kind, and without deep thought.

"The gods had for that moon made him theirs, for soon came a canoe with news that a ship of his country was at Tai-o-hae. Never did a man act more quickly. He made a feast, and to it he invited the village. A day it took to prepare it, the pigs in the earth, the *popoi*, the fish cooked on the coral stones, the fruits, and the nuts. To it he gave all his rum, and he handed me his gun, the paddles of his canoe, and his coats.

"But Po, the devil of night, crouched for him. The canoe to take him to Tai-o-hae was in the water, waiting but the end of the *koina kai*. Plentifully all drank the rich rum, but Tokihi most. Titihuti even he had greeted, and she sat beside him. She was now loath to have him go; you know woman. She leaned against him, and her eyes promised him aught that he would. She was more beautiful than on that night when she had spurned him, and she struck from him a spark of her own willful fancy. He took her a moment to his bosom, held her as the wave holds the rock before it recedes, and then, as the madness she ever made crept upon him, he drew back from her, held her again a fierce moment, and, dashing his cup to the earth, he turned upon her in fury.

"It was the evil noon. The eye of the sun was straight upon him, and as he cursed her, and shouted that now he was free from her, the blood rushed into his face, and painted there scarlet as the hibiscus the marks of the tattooing. The black *ama* the magic had erased now shone red. The stripes across his eyes and face

were like the scars a burning brand leaves, and the shark of the lodge was a leper's sign upon his brow.

"'*Mutu!*' I cried, for I saw death in the air if he knew, and all the gifts lost to me. 'Silence!' And the tribe heeded. No quiver, no glance showed the foreigner that one had seen what he himself had not. Titihuti fastened her gaze on him a fleeting second, and then began the dance of leave-taking.

"We raised the chant:

'Apae!
Kaoha! te Haoe.
Mau oti oe anao nei.'

"To the canoe we bore him, and thrusting it into the breakers, we called the last words, '*E avei atu!*'

"He was gone forever from Fatu-hiva. And thus I got this latter name I have, Puhi Enata, the Man with the Gun."

The old sorcerer rolled a leaf of *pandanus* about a few grains of tobacco.

"And you never had word of him?"

"*Aoe,* no," he said meditatively. "He went upon that ship at Tai-o-hae. But, American, I think often that when that man who was Tokihi came to dance in his own island, to sit at his own tribe's feasts, or when the ardor of love would seize him, always he tried to be calm."

CHAPTER XVIII

A fantastic but dying language—The Polynesian or Maori Tongue—Making of the first lexicons—Words taken from other languages—Decay of vocabularies with decrease of population—Humors and whimsicalities of the dictionary as arranged by foreigners.

MALICIOUS Gossip and Le Brunnec taught me Marquesan in the "man-eating isle of Hiva-Oa," as Stevenson termed my home. After supper or dinner I had a lesson in my *paepae;* often in a mixed group, for the beginnings of democracy are in the needs of company. Here were the governor, the highest official, an army officer and surgeon; Le Brunnec, a small trader; Kekela, a Hawaiian; Puhe, the hunchback servant of Bapp, the trader; Exploding Eggs, Ghost Girl, and Malicious Gossip and her husband, Mouth of God. The governor spoke French and a very little English, Le Brunnec those and Marquesan, Mouth of God and his wife Marquesan and a trifle of French, Kekela Marquesan and English, and the hunchback Marquesan only. Ghost Girl, of course, knew only that, but she never spoke at all except to beg for rum or tobacco. Lonesomeness made us intimate despite our difference of origin, status and language. We talked about the Marquesan language, and we two comparative newcomers strove to enlarge our vocabulary.

The derivation of words is an absorbing pursuit. Enwrapped in it are history and romance, the advance from the primitive, the gradual march of civilization,

and, besides, many a good laugh; for man made merry as he came up, and the chatterings of the missing links are often heard in the chase through the buried centuries for the beginnings of language. The Aryan, English's ancestor, was originally made up of a single consonant between two vowels, and I fancied I was speaking my ancestral words in this aboriginal tongue.

"There is nothing more fascinating than etymologies. To the uninitiated the victim seems to have eaten of 'insane roots that take the reason prisoner'; while the illuminate too often looks upon the stems and flowers of language, the highest achievements of thought and poesy, as mere handles by which to pull up the grim tubers that lie at the base of articulate expression, sacred knobs of speech, sacred to him as the potato to the Irishman." James Russell Lowell had himself eaten of that maddening weed. These Marquesan verbal radicals engaged me both by their interest and their humor.

The erudite philologist may harken back to the Chaldaic or another dead language of Asia or Africa and make ponderous tomes upon his research, but the amateur can dig as he plays only by being actually with a simple, semi-savage people, as I was, and finding among them, still active, the base and slight growth of human thought and emotion in speech. The most alluring tongue in sound and origin is the Maori, and Marquesan is Maori. It is spoken from Hawaii to New Zealand, and is termed the "grand Polynesian" language. The people of those two groups of islands, as well as those of the Marquesan, Society, Friendly, Paumotuan, Samoan, Tongan, and some other small archipelagos, have it as their vernacular, though its variations are so

great as to prevent converse except limitedly between the different islands. The Maori tongue is as full of melancholy as are those passing races. Soon it will be lost to use, like the ancient Greek or the mellifluous idiom of the cultivated Incas. It is decaying so fast now that a few years mark a decided loss of words, and lessen the adherence to any standard. Yet it is the most charming of all present expressions of thought or emotion, and it is a great pity that it perishes. One sighs for a South Seas Sinn Fein to revivify it.

The Polynesians, as scientists call them, know themselves, and therefore their tongue as Maori. And just as "British" to an Englishman is a word of pride, and "American" to our patriotic schoolboys and orators the greatest word ever coined, so "Maori" actually means first-class, excellent, fine. The Maoris were hundred per centers before the Chosen People.

I have lived much with Maori folk in many archipelagos and listened for years to their soft and simple, sweet and short words. Their speech is like the rippling of gentle waters, the breezes through the breadfruit-trees. It has color and rhythm and a euphonism unequalled. Language begins as poetry and ends as algebra, but here the algebraic stage was not reached, and there remained something of the unconscious uprush of its beginning, and the subliminal laws of mind which shaped its construction. For the Maori is a very old language, older than Greek or Latin, and was cut off from other languages at the outset of culture, before the mud of the Tigris was made into pots. The Marquesan indigene was never so complex, as in acute civilization, that his language could not tell what he thought

and felt, though he, too, had art to supplement words, as his tattooing, carving, houses, and temples prove.

The Maori has one inflexible rule, that no word shall end in a consonant, that no two consonants shall be together, and that all letters in a word be sounded.

There are only fifteen letters, or sounds, in the pure alphabet, b, c, d, j, h, l, q, s, w, x, and y being unknown. In some dialects other letters have been introduced in the adaptation of foreign words. They are not, however, properly Polynesian. Words are usually unchangeable, but pronouns and the auxiliary verb "to be" and many adjectives and verbs have curious doubling quality, like *ino iino; horo, hohoro, horohoro; haere, hahaere. Ii* in Marquesan means "anger"; *iiii* means "red in the face from anger." The adjective follows the noun, as in *moa iti,* little chicken, *iti* is the adjective. The subject comes after the verb "to be," expressed or understood, or after the verb that denotes the action of the subject.

The Maoris knew no genders except those for beings by nature male or female, and these they indicate by following words. In Tahitian, *tane* means "man," and *vahine* "woman," or "male and female." Thus I was called often O'Brien *tane,* and, where the same proper names are applied to men and women, the word *tane* or *vahine* indicates the sex: The sign of a well-known merchant in Papeete, the capital of Tahiti and the entrepôt of the South Seas reads, "Tane Meuel," the Tane being the name his proud parents gave him when born to show their delight at his being a boy.

While there is a dispute over the origin of the Maori, my friend, McMillan Brown of New Zealand, a su-

preme authority, believes it separated from the primeval Aryan a millennium or two ago, in the stone age, and came into the Pacific with the migration that first brought women into these waters. Some scholars say the language is to be classed with the modern European tongues, and especially with English. They cite the reduction of inflection to a minimum, the expression of the grammatical relationship of words by their order in the sentence, the use of auxiliaries and participles, the power of interchanging the significant parts of speech as occasion requires; the indication of the number of nouns by articles or other definitives, cases by prepositions, gender by the addition of the word for male or female, the degree of adjectives by a separate word, and the mood and tense of verbs by a participle.

As English spoken in isolated mountain regions—among the poor whites of the Middle West and South of the United States—becomes attenuated and broken, so in many of these islands and archipelagos the Maori language became differentiated by climate and environment, and shriveled by the limitations of its use. The Marquesan has been weakened by phonetic decay, the l and r almost disappearing, and in some places, too, the k being hardly ever heard.

As a nation perishes, so does its language. As its numbers decrease, the vocabulary of the survivors shrinks. It does not merely cease to grow; it lessens. Cornwall proved that and Wales; Ireland and Scotland exemplify it now. A language waxes with the mass and activities of its speakers. Scholars may preserve a grammar, as the school Latin, or as the Sinn Fein is doing in Ireland, but the body and blood of the vulgate

The author with his friends at council

Photo from L. Gauthier

House of governor of Paumotu Islands. Atoll of Fakarava

speech waste and ebb without the pulse of growth. Speech fattens with usage. The largest number of words in any language is found in that language which most people speak. The most enterprising race spreads its language farthest by religion, commerce, and conquest.

All these Polynesian tongues are dying with the people. Corrupted first by the admixture of European words, their glossaries written by men unborn to the land, the racial interests that fed them killed by the destruction of customs and ambitions, these languages are moribund, and as unlike those spoken before the white came as is the bison to the family cow.

The French observer Bovis said seventy years ago that only a few Tahitians understood and spoke pure Tahitian. No one does now. Yet, obsolescent and garbled as are these spiritual victims of pale-face domination, the South Sea folk cling to them affectionately. I attended the first sessions of the Hawaiian legislature under American territorial government. All proceedings were in both English and Hawaiian, many of the legislators not understanding English after eighty years of intimate relations with England and America. They, like the other Maoris, had not learned other tongues, but had let their own lapse into a bastard *patois.*

The Hawaiian is akin to the Marquesan. The variations consist in not using in one dialect words in use in another, in the sense attached to the same words, in the changing of vowels and of consonants in the same words, and also by the replacement of consonants by a click of the tongue. Almost all dialects have these unuttered

consonants expressed by the guttural accentuation of the vowel following.

I must know French to approach Marquesan, because these islands are French for eighty years, and I know of no practical grammar except that of Monseigneur Dordillon, written in 1857, and of no procurable dictionary but his. Both are in French.

A tragedy originating in petty discipline or episcopal jealousy saddened the last days of the writer, Bishop Dordillon. He had created out of the mouths of his neophytes the written Marquesan tongue, and he made his dictionary his life-work. They would not let him publish it. Ecclesiastical authorities, presumably of Chile,—for all Catholic missionaries here were under that see in early days,—forbade it. After forty years of labor upon the book, he was allowed to put it to print, but not to affix his name as author. Against this prohibition the sturdy prelate set his face.

"Not for himself," said the vicar, *Père* David, to me, "but for the church and our order, he would not be robbed of the honor. He died very old, and confided his manuscript to a fellow-priest. For fifty years each missionary to these islands copied it for his personal use. Ten thousand nights have thus passed because of the jealousy of some prelate in Valparaiso or in Paris. Pierre Chaulet, of our order, the *Sacré Cœur*, revised the book after forty-five years' residence here."

The Tahitian was the first Maori language reduced to writing. No Polynesian race had a written literature nor an alphabet. Writing was not invented nor thought of when they left their European home, nor did they acquire it in Malaysia. The Polynesians marked

certain epochs and events by monuments, and consecrated them with ceremonies. These events also marked their language, which was peculiarly susceptible to change and addition. It was abundant, and all the details of their material life and history were impressed upon the language in shades of meanings and words. In Tahiti the finer meanings disappeared ninety years ago, and the adverbs and degrees of comparison were lost. In the Marquesas, because of the lesser infiltration of whites, the language in its purity lasted longer. One of the mutineers of the *Bounty,* Midshipman Peter Heywood, who chose to remain in Tahiti rather than sail with Christian, wrote the first vocabulary of Tahitian in prison at Execution Dock in England. Bligh had determined to hang Heywood, and, awaiting his seemingly assured death, the young officer in his death cell set down the words he had learned in the happy days in the Isle of Venus, with their connotation in English. One may imagine it was a sad yet consoling task to live again the scenes of his joyous exile, and that each word of Tahitian he wrote conjured for him a picture of the scene in which he had learned it, and perhaps of the soft lips that had often repeated it to him. It is pleasant to know that the youthful lexicographer did not mount the gallows, and that his vocabulary was eagerly studied by the first missionaries leaving England for the South Seas on the *Duff*. The first word the clerics heard when the Tahitians boarded the *Duff* was *taio*, friend, and the reverends wrote to England that as the "heathen danced on the deck in sign of hospitality and friendship, we sang them, 'O'er the gloomy hills of darkness.'" With Heywood's list as a preparation, they established

an alphabet for Tahiti which fitted the dulcet sounds as they registered on their untuned ears. The general rule was to give the vowels their Italian value and to sound the consonants as in English. Their fonts of type were limited, and they had to use makeshifts of other letters when they ran out of the proper ones. They made monumental errors in their monumental toil, errors unavoidably due to their not being philologists, nor even well educated—errors perpetuated and incorporated in the language as finally written. This Tahitian dictionary and grammar formed the basis of all similar books in the Marquesan, Hawaiian, and other dialects. What store of ancient tongues the missionaries had, they put into linguafacturing religious words for the Tahitians. In fact, they were so busy inventing words for ordinary use, and for their prayers, sermons, and the translation of the Bible, they did not record many native words. They bowdlerized the whole Polynesian language, and emasculated an age-old tongue from which we might have gathered in its strength something of the spirit of our Aryan forefathers.

A chief difficulty of the makers of the written Polynesian languages was the adjectives. Primitive peoples have not the wealth of these that civilized nations possess, and fine shadings here are often expressed by intonation, grimace, or gesture.

There is no available Tahitian-English lexicon. The London Missionary Society published one before the French seized Tahiti in the forties. It is out of print, and as obsolete as to present-day Tahitian as Dr. Johnson's once-famous tome is as to English. The only copies are in the hands of the Mormon, Josephite and

other English-speaking missionaries in Tahiti, and in the libraries of collectors. It cannot be bought in Tahiti. Monseigneur Tepano Jaussen wrote one in French. I have it, dated at Paris, 1898; but so fast is the Tahitian tongue degrading into a bloodless wretched jumble that it, too, is almost archaic.

"A Vocabulary of the Nukahiwa Language; including a Nukahiwa-English Vocabulary and an English-Nukahiwa Vocabulary" was printed in Boston in 1848. No living Nukahiwan, or Marquesan, would understand much of it, as there has been such radical change and degeneracy in the dialect in the seventy years since it was written, and so few Marquesans survive.

The language shows that at one time they did not count beyond four, and the higher numbers were expressed by multiples of four. Afterward they came to five, which they made *lima* or the fingers of one hand. When the ten or denary system was adopted, the word *umi,* or whiskers, was chosen to mean ten, or a multitude.

The cardinal numbers are sometimes tiresome. For instance, thirty-one is *E tahi tekau me te onohuu me te mea ke e tahi.* I once remarked to a Marquesan chief that the Marquesan people said many words to mean a trifle and took a long time to eat their food.

"What else have we to do?" he asked me.

Strangely, the larger numbers are shorter. Twenty thousand is *tini.*

Should I wish to say "once," meaning at one time, I say, *mamua mamua mamua;* more anciently *kakiu kakiu kakiu kakiu;* "a very long time ago," *tini tini tini tini;* "quite a long time ago," *tini hahaa tini hahaa tini hahaa tini hahaa;* but "always" is *anatu* and "soon" *epo.*

This last word is a custom as well as a word, for it is like the Spanish *mañana* and the Hawaiian *mahope,* the Tahitian *ariana,* or our own dilatory "by and by."

The variations between the dialects in the different groups is great, and even in the same group, or on the same island, meanings are not the same. In the Marquesas, the northwestern islands have a distinct dialect from the southeastern. Valleys close together have different words for the same object. These changes consist of dropping or substituting consonants, t for k, l for r, etc., but to the beginner they are baffling. Naturally, the letters, as written, have the Latin value. Thus, Tahiatini is pronounced Tah-heea-teenee, and Puhei, Poohay-ee.

> For me words have color, form, character: They have faces, ports, manners, gesticulations;—they have moods, humours, eccentricities:—they have tints, tones, personalities.

Lafcadio Hearn might have written that about the Maori tongue.

The Marquesan language is sonorous, beautiful, and picturesque, lending itself to oratory, of which the Polynesians are past masters. Without a written tongue until the last century, they perfected themselves in speaking. It was a treat to hear a Marquesan in the full flood of address, recalling the days of old and the glories departed, or a preacher telling the love of God or the tortures reserved for the damned. They were graceful and extremely witty. They kept their audience laughing for minutes or moved them quickly to tears. Their fault was that shared by most European and American orators, long-windedness. The Marquesans

have many onomatopes, or words imitating natural sounds, and they are most pleasing and expressive. The written words hardly convey the close relation they bear to the reality when spoken. The *kivi,* a bird, says, *"Kivi! kivi! kivi!"* The cock says, *"Kokoao! va tani te moa! Kokoao!"* The god that entered the spirit of the priestess made a noise in doing so that was like this: *"A u u u u u u u u a! A u u u u u a!"*

When the pig eats, the sound he makes is thus: *"Afu! afu! afu! afu! afu! afu! afu! apu! apu! apu! apu! apu! apu! apu!"* In repeating these sounds the native abates no jot of the whole. The pig's *afus* are just so many; no more, no fewer.

When the cocoanut falls to the ground the sound is *"tu!"* The drinker who takes a long draft makes the noise, *"Aku! aku! aku! aku! aku! aku!"*

Moemoe is "the cry one makes of joy after killing any one."

It is notable that in English the names for edible animals when alive are usually the foundational Saxon, but when dead and ready for food they are Norman. Ox, steer, bull, and cow are Saxon. Beef and viand are Norman. Calf is Saxon, but veal is Norman; sheep is Saxon, mutton Norman. Probably the caretaker of these animals, the Saxon villain who tended them, made his names for them stick in the composite language, while the sitters at table, the Normans and those who aped their tongue, applied the names of the prepared meat as they plied their knives. Pig and hog, the latter meaning a gilded pig, are English, but pork is Norman.

So in the study of Marquesan one finds that the common objects have older names than those less usual.

The missionaries had a hard time suiting a word to the devil. With their vision of him, horns, hoof and tail, they had to be content with *kuhane anera maaa. Kuhane* means soul or spirit, *anera* means heavenly spirit, and *maaa* means wicked, and also a firebrand or incendiary. So Great Fern, my Presbyterian neighbor, gave me his idea that the devil—Tatana, as Satan is pronounced—was a kind of cross between a man and a wild boar running along with a bunch of lighted candlenuts, setting fire to the houses of the wicked.

It is not easy to learn well the Marquesan language, but it is not hard to acquire a smattering of the Lingua Franca spoken by natives to whites and whites to natives. The language itself has been so corrupted by this intercourse that few speak it purely.

Amusing are the English words adapted or melted into the native tongue, and it is interesting to trace their derivation. They call any tin or metal box *tipoti* (pronounced "teepotee"). The first metal receptacles they saw aboard the first ships were the teapots of the sailors, and they took the word as applicable to all pots and boxes of metal. The dictionary says "*Tipoti—petite boite en fer-blanc.*"

Beef is *Pifa* (peefa). *Poteto*—pronounced potato—means ship's biscuits or American crackers or cakes. The early whalesmen held out their hardtack to the natives and offered to exchange it for potatoes or yams. The natives took it that the biscuits were potatoes, and call them so to-day.

A curious and mixed meaning is that of *fishuka,* which one might think meant a fish-hook. It means a safety-pin, and is a sought-for article by the women. The

Marquesans had fish-hooks always, and a name for them, and so gave the English name to safety-pins, which appear like unto them.

Metau is a fish-hook, and a pin is *piné* (pee-nay). There are hundreds of queer and distorted words like these. Bread is faraoa, pronounced frowwa, which is flower, with an r instead of an l, as they have no l in their alphabet. In Tahiti, *taofe* is coffee. K and t and l and r are interchangeable in many Polynesian languages, and fashion has at times banned one or the other or exchanged them. Whims or even decrees by the pagan priests have expelled letters and words from their vocabularies, and some have been taboo to certain classes or to all. Papeete was once upon a time Vaiete, which means the same, a basket of water, the site conserving the streams of the hills. Vaiete was smothered under a clerical bull and forgotten along with other words thought not up-to-date.

I have heard an aged and educated American woman born in Honolulu call it Honororu, and Waikiki, Waititi, as she had learned when a girl.

Coffee here is *kahe,* not unlike the Japanese *kohi.*

Area is the same word in Latin and Maori, and virtually in English. It means space, in all. *Ruma,* a house, is much like room, and *poaka* or *puaka,* a pig, is akin to the Latin *porcus,* and the Spanish *puerca.*

When the missionaries here sought to translate a beloved phrase, "The sacred heart of Jesus," familiar in Catholic liturgy, they were puzzled. The Polynesian believes with some of the Old Testament writers that the seat of sentiment is in the bowels. "My very bowels yearned" is a favorite expression of Oriental authors.

Koekoe is the Marquesan word for entrails. It means

also intelligence, character, and conscience. A man of good heart is in Marquesan a man of good bowels. The good fathers were sore put to it to write their invocation to the "bleeding heart of the Savior," and one finds a warning in Bishop Dordillon's dictionary:

> Les Canaques mettent dans les entrailles *(koekoe)* les sentiments que nous mettons dans le cœur (*houpo*).
>
> Quelquefois il convient de traduire ad sensum pluto que ad verbum et vice versa; Le cœur de Jesus—te houpo a Ietu.

Extreme unction, the sacrament, is *eteremaotio,* pronounced, "aytairaymahoteeo."

The daily usage of common English words fixed certain ideas in the minds of the islanders for all time.

Oli mani, a corruption of old man, is used for anything old; hence a blunt, broken knife or a ragged pair of trousers is *oli mani.*

A clergyman is *mitinané,* pronounced mitt-in-ahny, an effort at missionary. In Tahiti the word is *mitinare* or *mikonare,* and is one of ribald humor. It is also a bitter epithet against one who is sanctimonious. The white traders, beachcombers, and officials have given the word this significance by their ridicule of religion and its professors.

What more picturesque record of the introduction of cattle into Samoa than *bullamacow?* It is the generic name in those islands for beef, canned beef, and virtually all kinds of canned meats. A child could trace it to the male and female bovine ruminants first put ashore there, and nominated by the whites "bull and a cow."

The good Bishop Dordillon notes that a cook is *enata tunu kai,* but that the common word is *kuki,* and for

kitchen *fae kuki.* That *kuki* is our own cook, as the Marquesans heard the sailors call him—cooky. *Fae* is house.

A pipe is *paifa* (pyfa), and tobacco *paké* (pahkay), rough pronunciations of the English words.

All through Polynesia the generic name among foreigners for a native is Kanaka, which is the Hawaiian word for man, or the human race. The Marquesan man is *kenana* or *enata* or *enana,* and woman *vehine.* The Tahitians and Hawaiians say *taata* or *tane* for man, and *vahine* or *wahine* for woman. The French word for Kanaka is *canaque.* This word is opprobrious or not according to the degree of civilization. The Marquesans often call themselves *canaques,* as a negro calls himself a negro; but I have seen a Tahitian of mixed blood weep bitterly when termed a Kanaka. Perhaps it is as in the Southern part of the United States, where the colored people refer to one another commonly as niggers, but resent the word from a white.

Pig in Marquesan is *puaa or puaka.*

Piggishness in English means greediness; but *cochonnerie,* the French verbal equivalent, means filth or obscenity, and in Marquesan has its counterpart in *haa puaa,* to be indecent; *hee haa puaa,* to go naked, and *kaukau haa puaa,* to bathe naked, words doubtless originating under missionary tutelage, as when the Catholic priests were all-powerful, they made laws forbidding nudity in public. In fact, a noted English writer who spent some time here was arrested and fined for sleeping upon his veranda one hot noon in the garb of Adam before the apple episode. The Catholic missionaries here never bathed in the rivers or sea, and had no bath

arrangements in their house. Godliness has no relation to cleanliness. Celibate man the world over had the odor of sanctity.

Shark is *mako,* and, curiously, *tumu mako* is a gross eater, or "pig" in our adopted sense, while *vehine mako* is a prostitute. *E haa mako* is to deliver over to prostitution. Probably this last phrase has been coined by the clergy for lack of a more opposite one. *Hateté* in Tahitian is chastity, for which the natives had no word nor idea.

When card-playing was introduced by the whites, its nomenclature was adapted. *Peré* or *pepa* are cards. *Pere* is play, pronounced p'ray, and *pepa* is paper. *Taimanu, heata, tarapu,* and *pereda* are diamonds, hearts, clubs, and spades; *teata* is the knave; *te hai*—the high—is the ace; and *furu* is a full. *Faráoa* is flour or bread and *faráoa peré*—flour play, flour or bread-like playing-cards—are biscuits or crackers. *Afa miniti* is a half-minute, or a little while. Others of the hundreds of bastard words now in the language and dictionary are: *Niru,* needle; *pia,* beer; *poti,* boat; *purumu,* broom; *putete,* potato; *punu,* spoon; *Roretona,* London; *tara,* dollar; *tavana,* governor or chief; *tohita,* sugar; *uaina,* wine; *tihu, dix sous,* or half a franc; *fira,* fiddle; *puka,* book. I must not omit the delightful *verkuti* for very good, or all right, or the stiff *eelemosina,* for alms, for which also, the Polynesians had no word, as no one was a beggar.

As did the American Indians, the Polynesians learned English and other European tongues through religion. The discoverers, who were officials, traders, or adventurers gained a smattering of the native language, but

hardly ever had the perseverance, if the education, to gather a thorough knowledge. Almost all the first modern dictionaries and grammars were written by clerics. The prime reason for their endeavors was to translate the sacred Scriptures into their neophytes' language and to be able to preach them. The Bible has been the first book of all outlandish living languages to be reduced to writing for hundreds of years.

Consequently, its diction, its mode of speech, and its thoughts have molded the island tongues. Words lacking to translate biblical ideas had to be invented, and the missionaries became the inventors. Some with Hebrew and Greek and Latin at their service used bits of them to create new words, and others drew on their imaginations, as do infants in naming people and things about them. In writing their dictionaries, they limited the European vocabulary to necessary, nice, or religious words, and the vernacular to all they could find, with a strict omission of those conveying immodest ideas. As the Polynesians had no morals from the Christian point of view, a great number of their commonest words were lost.

The Bible was done into Marquesan in the forties by English Protestants, and the old Hawaiian missionaries in the Marquesas made much of it in their teachings. It is not popular in French, and few copies survive. The Catholics do not recommend it to the laity. Protestantism is apathetic; yet I have seen a leper alone on his *paepae* deep in the Scriptures, and when I asked him if he got comfort from them, I was answered, "They are strong words for a weak man, and better than pig."

The same corruptions that have destroyed the original

purity of the Hawaiian and Tahitian tongues has marred that of these islands. The French officials had hardly ever remained long enough to encompass the language here, and seldom had they been of the scholarly type.

Rulers over colonies make feeble effort to speak well their subjects' tongues. Perhaps two of the dozen governors, military and civil, the Philippines have had under American ownership could talk Spanish fairly well, and none spoke the aboriginal tongues which are the key to native thought. They knew the governed through interpreters, and therefore knew nothing really of them. As our boys laugh at foreigners' ignorance, so do foreign colonists laugh at ours. I saw a famous American governor stand aghast when, asking his Filipino host, as he thought, for "a night lamp then and there," the astounded *presidente* of a village brought before the assembled company a something never paraded in polite society.

The missionary dictionaries of the Polynesian dialects, preserving only a very limited number of the words once existing, and hardly any of the light and shade, the idioms and picture phrases, of these close observers of nature, remind one of Shakespeare's criticism, "They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps."

The English missionaries put the Marquesan sounds into English letters, but when their day was done in Tahiti, and the French came to power because of French Catholic missionaries being expelled at the instigation of Protestant clerics, the poor Marquesans had to unlearn their English and take up French.

In Marquesan there never was an English dictionary circulated that I know of, and so the natives' first European language was French as far back as books and schools were concerned; but the commerce has been mostly in English, the whalers and the traders talk English, and all Polynesia is stamped by the heel of the Saxon.

A German army officer who traveled with me lamented that in German Samoa the language used is English when not Samoan, even the German officials being forced to use it.

On the schooners all commands are in English, though the captains are French and the crews Tahitian, whose English is confined to these words alone. At the German traders' in Taha-Uku the accounts are in English or American. It is the effect of the long dominance of the English on the sea and in commerce.

A chief difficulty of the makers of the written Polynesian languages was the adjectives. Primitive peoples have not the wealth of these that civilized nations possess, and fine shadings here are often expressed by intonation, grimace, or gesture.

CHAPTER XIX

Tragic Mademoiselle Narbonne—Whom shall she marry?—Dinner at the home of Wilhelm Lutz—The *Taua,* the Sorcerer—Lemoal says Narbonne is a Leper—I visit the *Taua*—The prophecy.

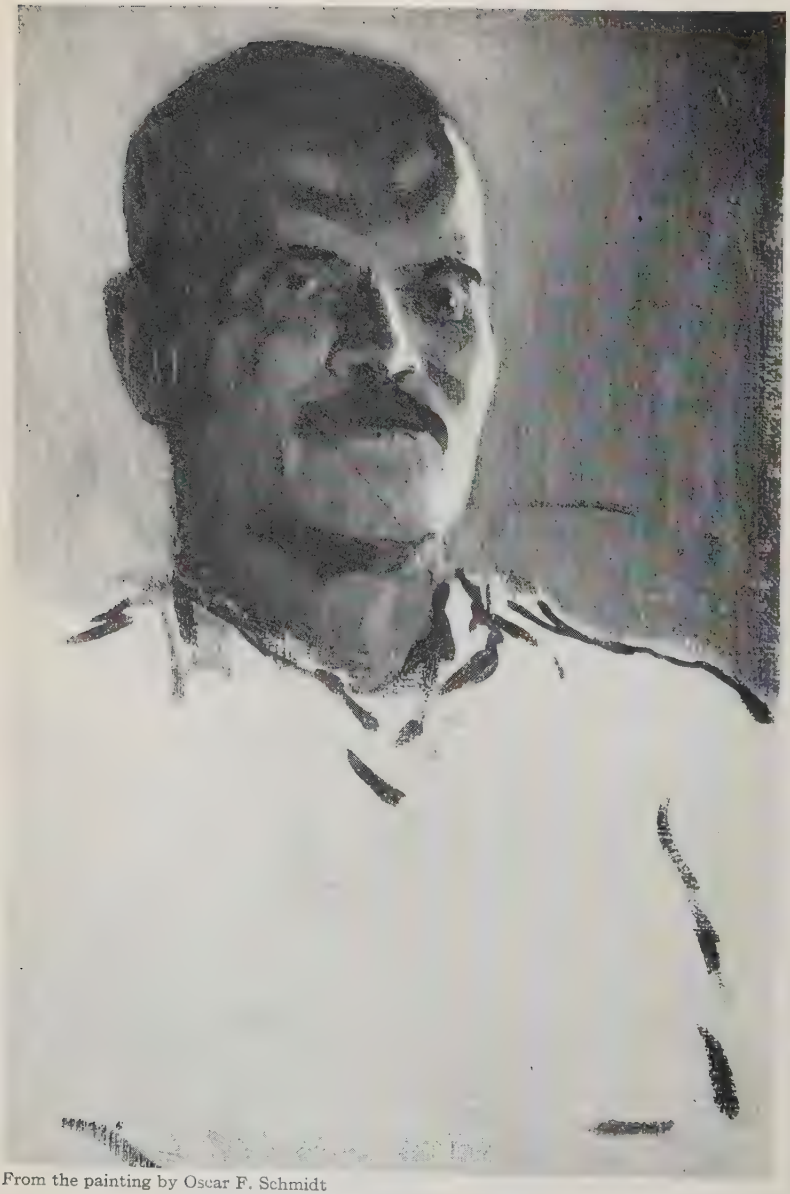
AS long as I live, I shall have, as my avatar of tragedy, Mademoiselle Narbonne. Fate had marked her for desolation. The grim drama of the half-caste whose spirit is riven by heredity and environment, fighting for supremacy of the soul, was enacted here in scenes of rare intensity and mournful fitness. While I did not await its final dénouement I saw enough to stamp its pitiable acts upon my memory, and later I learned of the last blows of an inevitable destiny.

Not even the pitiful plight of the bone-white daughter of the drunkard, Peyral, appealed to me as did the conspiracy of life and ungenerous men against the happiness of this singular creature, Mademoiselle Narbonne.

I recall the impression the first sight of her made upon me. I was by the door of the Catholic Church, the service half over, when she came in, and knelt at a *prie-dieu* especially placed for her. Wealth had its privilege in the house of God here as in the temple of Solomon. But Mademoiselle Narbonne had another claim to distinction though it did not win favor with the church. She was exotically beautiful, a distracting and fascinat-

From the painting by Oscar F. Schmidt

Nakohu, Exploding Eggs



From the painting by Oscar F. Schmidt

Haabuani, the sole sculptor of Hiva-Oa

ing contrast with the almost savage girls who knelt in the pews in their cotton tunics of red or white or pink. She had the grace of a hothouse flower among these blossoms of half-savage nature. She was an orchid among wild roses.

Peyral was then in process of winning me into his family, and both communicative and monitory.

"She is old Narbonne's daughter," he croaked. "The richest person in the Marquesas, now that her father is dead, but I would n't be her with all her money. Me, I value my skin!"

My whole attention was upon her, and the possible sinster meaning of his comment escaped me. Whites blackguarded other whites so commonly in the South Seas that one discounted or denied every judgment. I was to understand his implication later. Mademoiselle Narbonne had no part in the life of our valley of Atuona, nor did she come to it other times than when she attended the services at the Catholic church or visited the nuns with whom she had been from childhood until the death of her father a few months before. Upon inheriting his vast cocoanut-groves and considerable money she had said good-bye to her ascetic guardians and left the convent walls to take possession of her dead parent's house and estate. These were in the adjoining valley of Taaoa, and with her in the ugly European home built by him lived the stepmother she had known, and the mother whom he had driven away with blows, years before, when he caught her in a tryst with Song of the Nightingale.

I met her towards sunset a week later. During that time, I had often wondered what her tem-

perament might be, and what the future would spin for her. Many Daughters, Ghost Girl, and other all-Marquesan girls were striking in their aboriginal, hatched-carved beauty, but seemed at opposite poles to Mademoiselle Narbonne in sophistication and elegance. And yet at times I caught in her a glimpse of savagery, of wilful passion and abandonment to her senses beyond that upon the faces of these daughters of cannibals. The key to that occasional shift into barbarity I found in her home. Her father had been a driving, sober, and fierce Frenchman, a native of Cayenne, in Guiana, where the French in three hundred years have achieved only a devil's island for convicts with cruelty and foulness festering under the tricolor. Narbonne in the Marquesas had risen from a discharged corporal of marines to manager of the Catholic mission properties, and, by hook and crook, owner of countless cocoanut-trees. This child of his thirty years of banishment from his own deadly natal land was the one treasure he had cherished besides property. He had endured dangers in his early career here, fought and subdued swaggering chief and tropical nature, to erect a massive tomb of concrete, and to leave this daughter. She was already apathetic to his memory, and disregardful of the advice he had given always with mingled caresses and cuffs.

Her mother, Climber of Trees Who Was Killed and Eaten, who had been banished from his house for her unfaithfulness, had returned after his death to share it with Daughter of a Piece of Tattooing, who had replaced her. Between the two women was no jealousy, both enjoying the ease their hard years of serving the

Cayennais had earned them. In Climber of Trees I traced the source of those pagan moods which now and then swept from the face of Barbe Narbonne the least vestige of the mask the nuns had taught her to wear, and let be read the undammed passion and wind-free will of the real Marquesan woman.

"I will not be a *sœur*," she said to me. "The nuns are dear to me, and they want me to come into the convent, or to go to France for training to return here. I am waiting to know life. I am not satisfied with the love of the saints and of the Blessed Virgin."

"You are able to go where you please," I answered. "You do not have to go to France as a Religious. Paris would welcome you. Board the next schooner for Tahiti, and you are on the way to the wide world."

Mademoiselle Narbonne made a gesture of fear. Few Marquesans had ever gone abroad; there were terrors in the thought. It had been *tapu* to leave their island home, and, though, as far as Christianity might work the miracle, she had in the convent been purged of most of her mother's superstitions, she had not rid herself of this one.

"I would not care to go that great distance," she said, dreamingly, "but I would like to go to Tahiti, to see the cinema, and perhaps the celebration of the fourteenth of July. I have for years sent to Paris for my clothes. I have read many novels despite the sisters forbid it. I have one here that I wish you might talk to me about. Many nights I have sat up to read it."

She handed me a yellow paper-covered book, "Jean et Louise," by Antonin Dusserre, a story of pastoral and village life in Auvergne, and the unfortunate loves

of a simple peasant youth and maid. Its atmosphere was of the clean earth, the herds, and the harvests in a lost corner of France. Its action did not cover ten miles, yet the hate and injustice, the desires and defeats of its little world were drawn with such skill that they became universal. The author, himself a man in *sabots,* had breathed into his model of common clay the life of all humanity. I had read the book, and I was eager to hear her opinion of it; of an existence, artless as it was, still as alien to her knowledge as ancient Greece.

"What do you think about it?" I asked. She spoke French vividly, though with many Marquesan insets.

"Jean and Louise loved each other," she replied, "and, because she was poor and had no money to give a husband, his father separated them; and Jean allowed it. Already, Monsieur Frederick, the girl had shown her true love for him by spending the night with him in the hills with their sheep, and everybody knew she would have a child. That Jean was an assassin and a coward. Me, I would kill such a man if I loved him, but I could not love that kind."

Barbe Narbonne's black eyes flashed with her feeling.

"I am frank with you, Monsieur, because you are a stranger. You are not French nor Marquesan. I am both, and I hate and love both. I hate the French for what they have done to my mother's race, and I hate the Marquesans for not preferring to die than to be conquered. I have not had a lover. I cannot find one here that can satisfy me. If I did, he might have all my money and land. I would want a man who could read books, who was honest and strong, but who knew and liked this island of Hiva-Oa, who could ride and fight.

He must love me as"—she paused to weigh her comparison—"as nuns love Christ, for whom they leave their homes in France."

Father David, seeing me with Mademoiselle Narbonne one day, spoke of her to me.

"We have hoped all along that Jean Narbonne's daughter would remain with us," he said, inquisitively. "But the sacred heart of Jesus does not call every one. The church leaves all free to choose a vocation of service to God or not. We know she can find happiness only with the nuns, for there is only wickedness outside the convent. Barbe is now a woman, and unfortunately too much like her mother, who was a Magdalen. She cannot marry a native because she cannot live in the brush. What white can she select. There is the governor and Bauda and Le Brunnec, all bad Catholics, and who else?"

"There is Lutz, the big trader at Tahauku," I said.

"Lutz? No, no! He is a German, an enemy of France, and he is a Protestant, and, besides, he has had his own woman fourteen years. He is not married to her, but God knows even the devil could not excuse putting away such an old companion. What would he want of her but her money?"

"He has some property himself."

"No, no! It would be impossible. He is a German, a heretic, and I tell you he has that Tahitian woman ever since he has been here. Some day he will return to Germany, the Germany of Martin Luther, and leave behind any woman here. These Europeans who come here, except the Fathers, have no consciences. When they have made a little fortune, unless they are like

Guillitoue, or Hemeury François, who are more *Canaque* than the *Canaques,* they go back to marry innocent and unsuspecting women."

I cannot imagine why I mentioned Lutz. I had never seen him with Mademoiselle Narbonne, and she had not sounded his name. Of course, he was the only possibly eligible man other than the whites already enumerated. However, such thoughts did not come by chance, for the apostolic vicar's solicitude against him was matched by the boisterous roarings of *Commissaire* Bauda, the reincarnated musketeer. Over a Doctor Funk at his beach house, my repeating of what Father David had said brought from him an oath and a spluttering:

"*Sacré cochon!* That Lutz will go too far on French territory. He has the best lands, most of the trade, and is the only one who can sell liquor. Do we not all pay tribute to him? Now, me, I have not thought of marrying, but if that daughter of a French corporal should look for a suitable mate, who but Bauda? I am a soldier, a veteran of wars in Africa, I have the medal General Devinne pinned here,"—he slapped his chest,—"and I am a Frenchman. I could not agree to live here, but why not for her a house in Marseilles where there are so many dark people of our colonies? I could be there, say half the year, and the rest of it in Paris. I would defend her against the world, and in turn, would take my pleasure in the capital. I do not seek it, but rather than the robber, Lutz, should take the money to Germany, as I know he wants to do, it might, perhaps, be arranged. And, *pire alors!* I would soon send to the devil all those notions the church

has put in her little head. A drop of absinthe, *mon vieux?* Bauda has his eyes on Lutz."

I had met Herr Lutz each time that I had gone to his store at Tahauku, but our social relations began when he sent me, by his cook, a Tongan, a formal invitation to dinner. Like the young governor, this European merchant, as often as the small voice of his civilization spoke to him, cultivated the customs of his *bourgeois* class in order to reassure himself of his retaining them. I have the letter before me:

Tahauka, le ll avril.

Dear Mr. O. Brien,

In case that you having nothing else to do, I shall be glad to see you at Tahauku to-night. Do not bother please about dressing, the roads are too bad. If it suits you, I invite you to stay here over night.

With kindest regards,
Yours
Wilhelm Lutz

Certainly I had nothing else to do, except to explain to Exploding Eggs that I would not need his services to gather cocoanut husks for my dinner fire, and at five o'clock to start for Tahauku. Lutz's kindly sentence about not dressing was to me a joke, for I had to cross both the Atuona and the Tahauku rivers, and a storm, the day before, had made the trails—there were no roads —merely muddy indications of the direction. The Atuona stream I was able to wade with my trousers rolled and canvas shoes in my hands, and when I reached the Tahauku River, I found it waist-deep, and the foot-

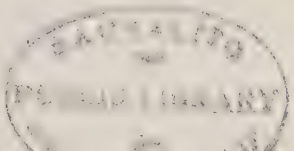
ing uncertain. A Chinese was gathering the coarse grass by the river's bank for Lutz's horse. It is a rare man who does not make a slave of his inferior who by conquest or necessity is forced to do his will. A man 's a man for a' that only when fighting equality or mass strength makes him so. I myself, who abhor inequality, proved a sinner there. Averse to getting my clothes wet, I tried to make the Chinese understand my wish that he take me on his back across the stream. Stupidity or a dislike to play horse caused him to assume a vacant look, the Oriental blankness which is maddening to Occidentals. I took him by the shoulder, mounted him, and drove him through the hundred feet of rushing water. On the other side, I thanked him, but his slit eyes gleamed balefully as he turned away.

The sky was racked with clouds, and they hung on the mountain like smoky draperies. The evening air was humid and depressing. Tahauku was a lonely, beautiful place, typical of the Marquesas, isolated, gloomy, but splendid. There were no craft in the bay except two small cutters moored near the foot of the stone stairs. A group of wooden buildings in an extensive clearing lined the road that led along the cliffs, and about it were thousands and thousands of palms, the finest cocoanut-grove that I had ever seen in the South Seas or Asia or India. They were planted regularly, not crowded, but with space for roots and for air. They had been set out two generations ago by the grandfather of the stark daughter of Peyral, the Irish cavalry officer, who was buried among them. Then a thousand Marquesans had led there the life of their ancestors; a score remained.

In the commodious house erected by the latter, Lutz lived in a determined though inadequate effort to preserve his German birthright. In the sitting-room in which he welcomed me stiffly, though courteously, were the hangings and cheap ornaments of a Prussian lower middle-class family, tidies, mottos, and books, including a large brass-bound Bible and the kaiser's portrait in colors. A bitters was drunk before the meal. Lutz sat at the head of a longish table, and his two white employees, a Hamburg apprentice just out, and Jensen, a Dane, joined us. The talk was in English, and it was curious, in this far-away island ruled by the French for seventy years, to find my tongue, as in almost every corner of the world, the powerful solvent of our mixed thoughts. Lutz talked about America, through which he had come from Germany on his way to Tahiti and the Marquesas. He praised our strength in trade, and derided the French and English, predicting that the Germans would divide the South Seas commerce with us, to the exclusion of others.

I liked Lutz, and, after the Hamburg apprentice and the Dane had gone to play chess, he and I passed some hours in chatting about music, books, and history. He had the solid foundation of the German schools below the universities, and he had read constantly his German reviews. Stolid, ambitious, swift to take a business advantage, he lived in this aloofness from the things he liked, in order to save enough to raise his social status on his return to his fatherland. Just before he showed me to my room for the night, he said:

"My old woman is going back to Tahiti. She is tired of it here after so many years. When Captain Pincher



comes in with the *Morning Star,* I'm sending her back with him. She 's getting lonesome for her kin. You know how those Tahitians are."

I had seen but a glimpse of the "old woman" that evening. She had not appeared openly, perhaps because of the rigid rule of Lutz, or perhaps from pique. On the road, though, I had said good day to her, a huge sack of a middle-aged creature, long past comeliness, but with an engaging and strong personality. The words of *Père* David and of Bauda recurred to me before I slept. The "old woman" had been here fourteen years, and her sudden repatriation coincided with Mademoiselle Narbonne's coming into her fortune, and her restlessness for a white husband.

I sensed a conflict. Tahitian women, as well as all these Polynesians, were seldom afflicted by sexual jealousy, the soul-ravaging curse of culture, yet they had a pride, an overwhelming dignity of personal relations, which often brought the same dire results. The rejected one many times had eaten the *eva,* the poisonous fruit, or leaped to death from a cliff, though she would have shared the house mats with her rival as a friend. That was because they ranked mere physical alliance as but a part of friendship between men and women, often an unimportant beginning, in the natural way of propertyless races.

"Lutz will not get rid of Maná so easily." François Grelet, the shrewd Swiss, of Oomoa, on the island of Fatuhiva, whom I had visited following my evening with Lutz, had remarked to me: "She has as much strength of will as he has. Her father was the chief of Papenoo, in Tahiti, and Lutz had to steal her away

to bring her here. I remember her then because the schooner, on which they were, made port in Oomoa for a few days. Lutz was in his twenties, with a year in Tahiti to learn the business before his firm sent him to the Marquesas. Now, you know, for Maná to leave her folks and her island meant a very unusual courage and will, and she has stuck with Lutz all this time. He is heavy-handed, too, when vexed over waste. I don't think it will be a matter of settling with her as to support; they all have a living at home. Also, the Tahitians do not love the Marquesans. You will see!"

I had returned from my visit to Grelet, when, arriving at night in a canoe to the stone steps at the Tahauku landing, Tetuahunahuna, the steersman, pointed out to me the dark bulk of a schooner swinging at anchor.

"Fetia Taiao," he said. It was the schooner on which Lutz's old woman was to depart from her long-time abode.

In the weeks that had elapsed during my stay with Grelet, the affair of Mademoiselle Narbonne and Herr Lutz had actually become the gossip of Atuona. The church, the French nation, the masculinity of all the other whites, were concerned. The suitor was said to pay almost daily visits to the Narbonne house in Taaoa, and I saw him galloping past my house in the afternoons, and heard sometimes in the night, his shod horse's hoofs on the pebbly road.

"It is terrible," Sister Serapoline said to me, when I took her a catch of *popo* to the convent. "That German is a heathen, and has been living in sin with a good woman for years. Now he will drag down to hell the

soul of our dear Barbe. We are offering a novena to Joan of Arc to bring her to us. She has not been in the church or convent for a month. She would make a wonderful sister, for she has a good heart and a true devotion to Joan of Arc. And, to tell the truth, her money would be put to a divine purpose instead of going into his business here or being wasted in Germany."

"What about Maná?" I asked. "Is she satisfied to go away?"

"That I doubt, but Maná, too, has not been inside the church for a long time. Monsieur, I have heard that she has fallen from the true religion, and is dealing with sorcery. The devil is astir in Atuona now."

Song of the Nightingale was of Taaoa, the valley of Mademoiselle Narbonne, and, as I said, had once been the lover of her mother. Through serving a term of imprisonment for making intoxicants of oranges and of the juice of the flower of the cocoanut-tree, his servitude spent as cook for the Governor allowed him leisure for a few stolen hours with his tribe. Song was a very evil man; of that perverse disposition which afflicts great murderers like Gilles de Raiz or the Marquis de Sade, and also cowardly ones who do in mean words and accursed inuendoes what the arch villains do in deeds. He hated because he was thwarted. Before the white régime he would have set valley against valley, and island against island for mad spleen. I had seen his vileness in a ludicrous light when he had put Ghost Girl's god, the *kuku,* before her as food, and had reviled her grandmother eaten by his clan. He often made fun of the governor to me, and of me, doubtless, to many.

Song stopped at my house one night late. He was

returning from Taaoa, and had drunk deeply of the illicit *namu enata,* the cocoanut brandy. He begged me for a drink of rum, and I could ill refuse him as he had filled my glass so frequently at the palace. He tossed off a shell of the ardent liquor, and filled his pipe from my tin. Then he began to talk loosely and boastfully as was his habit. He ridiculed the churches, and their teachings, and spoke of Gauguin, and his carven caricature of the bishop. Gauguin was a *"chick tippee,"* he said again, and not any more afraid of the sacrament than was he.

"They cannot hurt you if you are *tapu* as I am," he went on. "The priest talks of Satan and his red-hot fork, and calls the *taua,* our one remaining priest, a child of Satan. I have been to see that *taua.* He is of my family, and, though he is very old, he does not believe in the Christian magic, but in our own. He can do anything he wants to a Marquesan. He can make them sick or well."

"How about a white?" I asked, negligently.

"I don't say that. The *taua* might work his sorcery with some, but he does not try. Do you know whom I saw in his hut to-night? Maná, the woman of Lutz, the *Heremani.* What did she there? Why do you go to the mission? To get the *bon Dieu* to help you. Maná went to Taaoa to ask the Marquesan Po, the god of night, to help her. The *Taua* did not inform me, but Maná said to me that if she sailed on the *Fetia Taiao* to Tahiti, Ma'm'selle would never marry Lutz. The *taua* would make her *tapu* to the *Heremani,* who would be afraid to take her to his bed."

Song of the Nightingale poured himself another

drink, and, muttering an incantation in his own language, slunk out toward the palace to hoodwink the governor. My heart misgave me, for I had a sincere admiration for Mademoiselle Narbonne, and I could not help a kindly feeling for the *Heremani,* Lutz, who had heaped favors on me. When my money had run out, he had trusted me for months, though he had my bare word that I expected a draft from America. My sympathies were divided odiously. Lutz seemed to be mercenary in his pursuit of Narbonne's daughter, and yet might not love move him? He had been faithful to Maná for fourteen years, according to everybody, which was a marvel for a white man. Maná was to be pitied, and her endeavor to circumvent her competitor not to be despised. I could not sneer at the sorcery of the *taua.* In Hawaii, I had seen a charming half-English girl, educated and living in a cultured home, yield to a belief in the necromancy of a Hawaiian *kahuna,* and die. Her strength "ran out like water." With everything to live for, she faded into the grave at twenty.

How was *taua* to aid *Maná* to keep the affections of Lutz? The philter that Julia sought on the slopes of Vesuvius to win the love of Glaucus came to mind, but the *tauas,* I remembered, used no physical means to work their spells. They depended entirely on the mind. They studied its every intricacy, and the power of suggestion was, I reasoned, their weapon and medicine as it was with Charcot, Freud, or Coué, the modern *tauas* of Europe. In my travels and residence of a dozen years in Asia and the South Seas, I had been confronted often with phenomena inexplicable except through control of others' minds by the thaumaturgist.

Nevertheless, I had so frequently had such an opinion shattered by a more artful and cunning material explanation that at each instance I wavered as to the method of the mage.

The schooner *Morning Star,* the *Fetia Taiao,* swung about the Marquesan group, from Tahauku to Taiohae, Oomoa, and Vaitahu, and after a month dropped anchor again near the stone steps of Lutz's *magazin.* Lying Bill I met at the governor's, and heard him say that he had as passenger for Papeete the "old woman of the Dutchman."

"I 'll sail with the first 'an'ful o' wind after we load our copra," he said. "That 'll be in three days. Maná is bloomin' well angry at Lutz. I 'm wonderin' if she won't go over to Taaoa and 'ook out those purty eyes o' Ma'm'selle. 'E oughta 'ave Mc'Enry's woman to deal with. She 'd take a war-club to im."

Lutz had me to dinner again the night before the schooner left, and at table were, besides Jensen and the Hamburg apprentice, Captain Pincher and Ducat, his mate. I did not get a glimpse of Maná, though Lutz appeared uneasy, and occasionally went out into the kitchen and once into the garden. The good Patzenhofer beer was plentifully served by the Tongan, and, un-iced as it was, we drank several cases of it with *"Hochs!"* from Lutz and the Hamburger, *"Skoals!"* from Jensen, and " 'Ere's yer bloody 'ealths!" from Lying Bill.

McHenry, I learned, was keeping a store on the atoll of Takaroa. The *rahui* at Takaroa was finished, and the divers dispersed. No great pearl had been brought up, though Mapuhi and his tribe had had a

bountiful season. Our party broke up about midnight, and, after the seafarers had gone down the basalt stairs to their boat, and his clerks were in bed, Lutz and I sat a few minutes. He, perhaps, wanted to avow his intentions regarding Barbe Narbonne, to justify himself about Maná, and to gain from me the comfort of my concurrence in his ethics and ambitions, but his stiff Prussian bringing-up forbade him. Instead, he spoke of his childhood at Frankfort, his education, and his failure to go to a University on account of poverty. At seventeen, he had been put to work in an exporting house in Hamburg, and had passed seven years as an underling with small pay. His chance had come when debts due the company in Tahiti called for an experienced man in goods and finance to go to Papeete and wring a settlement from the debtor. He had been able to please his firm, and to buy out the failing concern by Hamburg backing. In the fourteen years since, he had been exiled in Tahauku, and despite his grinding efforts and many voluntary privations, had not amassed much. His mother and father in Germany were dependent on him, and he had not been able once to visit them because of the expense.

Maybe the Patzenhofer had mellowed my sympathies, for I agreed with him that he was a dutiful son and a worthy merchant, and that life had not been quite fair to him. There was a moment when I feared he was about to divulge his secret, but a noise outside made him start, and after he had listened with frowning brow a minute he said good night. He did not wish to be alone, it was evident, for he said he would sleep on

a straw couch in my room. I heard him tossing as I fell asleep.

From the hill of Calvary the next afternoon I saw the *Morning Star* as she glided past the opposite cliffs of Tahauku. At least the main barrier to Lutz's plans had gone from the Marquesas. As Mademoiselle Narbonne no longer came to Atuona, I had not seen her for many Sundays, and, although I still saw Lutz on his peregrinations, and from my Golden Bed hearkened to the iron of his horse's heels, I had no direct nor even fairly certain knowledge that he had won her hand. Gradually a desire to see her, to make sure of her intentions, grew in me, and I had fixed the following Sunday as a date for my journey to Taaoa, when a stupefying incident disarranged my scheme.

Le Brunnec, the trader, my companion of the wild cattle hunting, was ever on the outlook for information or entertainment for me. Speaking a little English, and by nature friendly, he now and again sent to my cabin a stranger, with a sealed note explaining the bearer's particular interest to me. One day, there appeared an American citizen, Lemoal, a twisted, haggard native of Paimpol, who had been an adventurer and vagabond all about the world. After a shell of rum, he had boasted a while, and then when I had given him another drop with a gesture of farewell, he had said with a leer and a curse, that he had seen me with Mademoiselle Narbonne, and that "I would better beware."

"She is a leper, that rich girl," he had said; "everybody here knows it but you. Let the accursed German of Tahauku get it, not you!"

He ambled down the trail like an old kobold, a spirit of evil and filth, wagging his long beard, and sucking at his pipe. I threw away the shell from which he had drunk. But in my horror at what he had said, I could not forget that Mademoiselle Narbonne had asked me a strange question, at first meeting—whether it was true that the Government was segregating the lepers in Tahiti, and immuring them in a leprosarium. I had answered in the affirmative, and thought curiosity dictated the query. Now, with Lemoal gone, his statement and her question rose together. Le Brunnec's note said that Lemoal was not to be believed always. He might have told Le Brunnec about Barbe. It could not be true! Yet, the missionary's daughter a half a mile away from me was a leper, and Tahiatini, Many Daughters, was suspect. The Chinese imported by the American, Hart, had brought the terrible disease from Canton, and many had died from it in the Marquesas. Those who had it were free to live as they pleased, for there was no care of them by the authorities. But in Tahiti, for the first time, they had taken them from their families, and were keeping them in a separate estate. It was easy, with the abominable assertion of Lemoal agitating me, to exaggerate or misinterpret the meaning of Mademoiselle Narbonne's interrogation.

Did the visit of Maná to the *taua* have anything to do with Lemoal's wretched slander or gossip?

I should be a fool, I reckoned, to believe Lemoal. Even the vicar apostolic had intimated that the Protestant pastor was a rake, and I knew him to be a virtuous man. Gauguin had written in his journal that the

bishop was a "goat," and I believed him a vow-observing celibate. Much, then, I was to credit this lifetime villain, Lemoal! Men who stayed too long in the South Seas became natural, simple children of the sweet soil, or decayed and rejected, rotten fruit of civilization when unsuited to assimilation.

A week after Lemoal had poisoned my mind with his intimation, I met Mademoiselle Narbonne at Otupotu, the divide between the valleys of Atuona and Taaoa, where Kahuiti, the magnificent cannibal of Taaoa, had trapped the Mouth of God's grandfather and eaten him. It was a precipice facing the valleys of the island of Hiva-Oa, as it curved eastward. The brilliant stretch of sea contrasted with dark glens in the torn, convulsed panorama—gloomy gullies, suggestive of the old pagan days when the Marquesans were free and strong. Above the shadowy caverns, the mountains caught the light of the dying sun and shone green or black under the cloudless sky. To sit there as the day declined and to view the tragic marvel of the advent of night was to me a rapturous experience made sorrowful by the final sinking of the sun. No long twilight, no romantic gloaming followed the plunge of terror. I have always peopled it with afrits and leprechawns, mischievous if not malicious.

It was an hour before dusk when I arrived, and soon I heard, far down the glade of Taaoa, the slow approach of a horse. As the rider came in view, I waved my hand, and the daughter of the *Cayennais* called to me, with a trifle of surprise in her soft voice. She dismounted and sat beside me. She had changed. In

what exactly I could not define. She was less self-centered, silent, melancholy. The savage had fled from her face, and animation with it.

"I am half French, but all Marquesan," she had said to me once.

She was all white this evening. The rich color had deserted her cheeks, and in her pallor was tenderness and longing. I was drawn to her as never before. Her delicate hand crept into mine, and we remained hushed a few minutes. Curiously, the words of Lemoal did not recur. She was so perfect, so beautiful, the nightfall so embracing, other thoughts were banished. We were in a wild expanse, in a bed of ferns, and landward a prodigal glory of palm and plant, vine and orchid. Nature had spent its richest colors and scents, its rarest shapes and oddest forms, for bird and insect, star and sun, to look upon and rejoice in, and with no count of man. In her grandest or most subtle manifestations, nature had no thought to suit herself to man, and only as he adapted himself to her thousand smiles and frowns, could he remain alive upon an inconsequential planet which was nothing with the blazing star now going down in the west. A shudder, and man died by myriads; a breath, and he perished. But ever nature swelled the seeds of her unthinking creations and ornamented her body with fresh fruitage.

Sunset and death, the heat of the day and of life, and then the lapsing years in the descent toward the cold grave, often stumbling and trembling, and without the cadence and the color of the passing day; and both ending in murk and fear. These tropical islands were for youth, when every sense was a well of enjoyment.

Age must only regret not having known them sooner.

The slim hand of Barbe Narbonne, folded in mine, excited no pleasanter thoughts than these as we sat at Otupoto. I felt that I must have drawn them from her, for I was happy, and the tide of life running strong in my veins.

She broke the quiet.

"What do you think of Monsieur Lutz?" she said suddenly.

"What do I think of Monsieur Lutz?" I parried. "I like him. Why do you ask me that?"

"Because, Monsieur, he has asked me to marry him; and I am thinking."

She took away her hand and smoothed her brow as if she swept away cobwebs.

The crisis had come in which her future was at pitch and toss. The years of childhood make most of us what we are. The white surrounded by Polynesians in the early years of life, learning their language first, and having them as playmates, willy-nilly becomes more than half Polynesian. Their tastes, dreads, superstitions, pleasures, and ideals become his. Barbe Narbonne had the savage blood of her mother to accentuate her environment. The exigency that now confronted her had kindled in her divided soul for the first time the conflict between the white and the brown. From infancy she had been in the convent, and now she had had a few months of unrestraint in the society of her two mothers, and recently of release even from the rigors of the confessional and the nuns' admonitions. She had been slipping back fast into the ways of the Marquesans; the palm-groves had claimed her, and the jungle was

closing in upon her. The courtship of the European, Lutz, was a challenge to her white strain, but it was confusing, for it added a third element. Her mothers' semi-savagery, and the convent strictness of rule were in strife now with this offer of relief from both by the most important white in the Marquesas except the governor.

"Do you love him?" I asked her, and looked into her eyes.

She cast them down a moment in confusion or meditation. No longer she wore black. That had been in imitation of the sisters' dull dress, and she had put it aside with the mass and the confession. Her tunic, the simple flowing garment of the valley, was of pale blue. Her hair was parted on her low, delicate forehead. Her legs were stockingless, her feet thrust into small, brown shoes.

She raised her eyes, and replied slowly, seeking the answer herself, maybe, at the moment.

"Monsieur Lutz is a gentleman. He says he loves me. I must marry a white man. Who else is there? If I stay in Taaoa, I shall become a Marquesan pure. It is so easy."

Her manner was naïve and confiding, and affected me deeply. Where lay her chance for happiness?

Abruptly, the accusation of Lemoal rung in my ears; and I could hardly refrain from voicing it, in a wish to hear her fierce denial. Never had she been more attractive, more the pattern of the most wholesome and fairest of her mingled parentage. I could not resist saying:

"You know Lemoal?"

"That *canaille*! He worked for my father for long and cheated him. Ah, he is a bad one! Only the last few weeks he has been hanging about my house to wheedle food and drink from me without return. He is of no account. Why do you ask?"

"He says that you are ill."

"Ill! I?"

Her eyes closed, and her body became limp an instant. A flush spread over her face.

"Lemoal said that!" she cried. "It is a lie! What ill have I? Tuberculosis? Do I cough? Am I thin? The *miserable!* It is strange. Kahuiti and two others have asked me in the past few days if I were ill. Monsieur Frederick, you are my friend. Look at me! Am I not well?"

She leaped to her feet. An instant she entertained the suggestion of stripping her tunic from her, and revealing her entire body for judgment. She bared her girlish bosom, and her hands tore at the gown, and then the convent inhibitions conquered, and she hastily covered herself.

She blushed darkly, and turned from me. The mortal sin of immodesty had been the daily preachment of the nuns.

"I must go home before the night," she said weakly. "I will not go on to the convent. Good-by, my friend. Pray for me!"

The dusk was already thick as she mounted her horse, and I made out the trail to Atuona with difficulty. Dimly, I discerned the workings of an unholy spell, or my sympathy for her and my hatred for Lemoal conjured up a web of witchcraft that would affright her

suitor, and bind her to the scene of her birth. How far this web had been spun I could only guess. I put the matter flatly to Le Brunnec. Yes, he had had the same story from Lemoal, and so had many others. As to Lutz's hearing it, he did not know, but Lemoal was despised by Lutz, who had quarreled with him long ago. He would not dare to carry his tale to Tahauku, nor would any one. The Prussian trader in his dealings had inculcated respect and a decent fear of himself.

That evening I sent Exploding Eggs to tell Song of the Nightingale I wanted to see him at my house. When he came, I referred, after the customary drink of rum, to the *taua,* and declared my eager wish to meet him. I knew Kahuiti, of the valley of Taaoa, who was still a cannibal, and I must know the last of the pagan priests there. The cook was well pleased, and we agreed that the first evening the governor took his dinner at the house of Bauda he would come for me. Le Brunnec smiled when I let him know my plan.

"Go ahead!" he said. "I am no believer in anything but a reasonable profit, and a merry time. You can do nothing if you are trying to help Mademoiselle Narbonne. I have seen too often the meddling white fail with these Marquesans. They know more about many important things than we do, even if they don't wear shoes or eat with a fork. That old *taua* may be a fool, but they don't think so, and there's the secret."

Song of the Nightingale appeared at six, a few evenings later, and we started on the five miles' ride to Taaoa. I had borrowed a horse of Mouth of God, and the prisoner-cook had no difficulty in finding one. Too many people dreaded his bitter tongue and violent dis-

position to refuse him. As we went through the pass at Otupotu and descended the winding trail to the adjoining valley, the sun was below the far tops of the green hills and was tinting all the sky in shades of softest red. Clouds, edged with brilliant gold, were like lilies in a garden of roses. The air was still and heavy when we rode by the sulphurous springs where Mouth of God's grandfather was slain by Kahuiti's spear. My guide avoided the village of Taaoa, and took a path which led by a graveyard.

On an obelisk had been inscribed half a century before:

Inei Teavi o te mata einana o Taaoa.

"Here lie the bodies of the people of Taaoa." An all-inclusive tombstone, for there was no other, but, instead, banana-plants, *badamiers, vi*-apples, and chile peppers, the fiery-red pods of the latter bright against the green and black. Behind the burial-place were two great *aoa* trees, giant banyans that must have been there when the first adventurous white cast anchor in these waters. In the lessening light, they had a mysterious air of life in death; they were moribund with age, twisted and gnarled like those century-old Mission Indians of California who sit outside their adobe hovels and show a thousand wrinkles on their naked bodies. Yet these banyans were filled with life, for a hundred new shoots were thrusting from above into the rich mold of the earth, and presaging renewal of the dead limbs and greater growth of the whole.

The trees covered acres, overpowering in their immensity, with columns of regular and solemn symmetry. Their ponderous buttresses were like towers, but divided

into many separate chambers where the branches had descended from heights to become roots, and later other columns. These trees were individuals, shattered and worn by existence, broken by storms, the boughs arching a hundred feet from the ground to let down grotesque and curving branches that blindly groped for a grasp upon the soil. They were tragedies in wood, and stirred in me memories of old French tales of darksome wolds, of the shadowy, dripping spinneys where the *loup garou* lay in wait for the bodies and souls of his victims.

Into one of the cells of the banyan, Song of the Nightingale led me. As large as an average room, it was divided by a *tapa* hanging, and from behind this came, at his call, the *taua.* He had a snow-white beard and long hair, and was very old. His body was quite covered with tattooing, the most elaborate designs I had seen. The candlenut ink, originally blackish-brown upon his dark skin, had, as the result of decades of kava drinking, turned to a verde-antique, like the patina upon an ancient bronze.

"Moa taputoho," said Song, with extreme seriousness. "A sacred hermit." One who had forsaken all the common things of existence to commune with the gods.

The sorcerer's surrounding were druidic, remindful of the Norns, who dwelt beneath the world-tree Ygdrasil, Urd and Verdande and Skuld, and decided the fate of men.

He gazed at me intently, raised his hand in a grave manner, and said something to my companion which I did not understand.

"He asks if you want anything of him," explained the convict.

"Yes, I do," I replied. "Ask him if the daughter of Liha-liha is a leper?"

My interpreter did not put the question direct, but I comprehended his many sentences to state my meaning.

The *taua* pursed his lips and withdrew behind the curtain. From his hidden fane issued the deep rumbling of his voice in a chant.

"He is asking the *tiki,* the image of the god," said Song, fearfully.

I confess I was aware of a depression approaching fear. It was dark in the banyan cell, and a torch of candlenuts threw a fitful glimmer on the *tapa* and the scabrous walls.

Soon above the indistinct voice of the *taua* was the sound of something in the branches of the banyan, of a flapping of wings, and a knocking.

"It is a bat," I whispered to Song.

"It is the god coming to answer," said he, cowering with real horror.

A dreadful thing it is not to believe in the supernatural when in ordinary surroundings, and yet to be subject to horrible misgivings when circumstances conjure up visions of terror.

The uncanny noises in the tree increased, and then the mammoth banyan shook as though an earthquake vibrated it. Song and I were now flat on the ground, and I repeated an invocation of my childhood:

"From the powers of Lucifer, O, Mary, deliver us!"

I said it over and over again, and it numbed my senses during the few minutes that the pandemonium continued.

When the *taua* emerged, Song turned his back upon him, and, taking my hand, reversed me, too.

"Tapu!" he said, nervously.

"Tuitui!" began the *moa taputoho.* "Be silent!" and in a staccato manner pronounced his divination. His tone was orotund and dignified, and impressive of sincerity. The words were symbolic, and of other generations, and Song waited until he had finished to translate them. Before he could do this, the *taua* said, *"Apae!"* a word of dismissal, and retired. Song seized me by the hand as I went toward the curtain, and pulled me away; but, for a second, I had a glimpse of a rude, basalt altar built against the trunk of the tree, and on it a stone image before which was a heap of fruit. I was directed speedily away from the banyan, and not until we had mounted our horses and galloped a hundred feet did the convict answer my question.

"The *moa taputoho* said that this girl will offend the god if she marries a *haoe,* a foreigner, and that she knows already how the god will punish her if she leaves her own valley of Taaoa."

And flinging out the words as we pounded up the hill, it was as if the maker of moonshine was more prophetical than the *taua* himself, or was a most interested mouthpiece, for he put into them a malevolence missing from the aged hermit's voice. That had been majestic though forboding, while the intonation of Song of the Nightingale was personal and harsh. Maybe he hated Lutz as did Lemoal. Le Brunnec corroborated my suspicion.

"Lutz found him stealing a demijohn of rum, and had him sent to prison for several months," said the Breton.

"But, granted that every one hates the German," he continued, "you are wasting your sympathy and time. I predict that Lutz will get Mademoiselle Narbonne, but that the *taua* and his magic will snare her finally. These people are born to be unhappy and to die under our Christian dispensation."

So, from day to day, the rumor of her dismaying condition spread, until it was known to almost everyone of the few thousand Marquesans in all the islands, and to all others except Lutz. His wooing had not ceased, and when the day's work was done at Tahauku, and his evening meal despatched, as for months, he thought nothing of the ten slippery miles in the pitchy blackness to and from the home of his Golden Maid. His hoof-beats entered into my dreams, and after midnight I often awoke as they resounded on the little bridge across the stream by the Catholic Church, Poor devil! He was to pay dear for his brief dream.

CHAPTER XX

Holy Week—How the rum was saved during the storm—An Easter Sunday "Celebration"—The Governor, Commissaire Bauda and I have a discussion—Paul Vernire, the Protestant pastor, and his Church—How the girls of the valley imperilled the immortal souls of the first missionaries—Jimmy Kekela, his family—A watch from Abraham Lincoln.

HOLY Week passed in a riot of uncommon amusement. Its religious significance—the most sacred period of the year both for Catholics and Protestants—was emphasized by priest and preacher with every observance of the church, but the lay white harked back to the mood of the ancient feast of spring and drew the natives with them. Permits to buy rum and wine were much sought for by the Marquesans, to whom drink was forbidden. The governor was of an easy disposition, and few who had the price of a *dame-jeanne* of rum or wine failed to secure it. As Lutz, the German trader at Tahauku, the adjoining valley, was the only importer of intoxicants, the canoes were active between our beach of Atuona and the stone steps at Tahauku, while others rode a-horse or walked. On Holy Thursday an uninformed new-comer might have pronounced the Marquesans a bustling race with a liquid diet.

Cloudbursts had swollen the streams, and made the trails troughs of mud, so that when Exploding Eggs and Mouth of God and I arrived at Atuona beach with our empties we were glad to place the receptacles in the

canoe of a fisherman for transport to Lutz's. A gesture of my cupped hand to my mouth made him eager to oblige me. We walked up the hill and past the Scallamera leper-house. My friends' bare feet and skill made it hard for me to keep up with them. Shoes are clumsy shifts for naked soles. After a glass of Munich beer and a pretzel with Lutz, Exploding Eggs finding his own little canoe at the stone steps, we loaded the demi-johns in it and the fisherman's. I went with the latter, and Mouth of God with my valet. The canoes were narrow and they sank to the gunwales with the weight. The tide of the swollen river tore through the bay, and soon Mouth of God cried out that we must take Exploding Eggs in our craft. The boy transfered himself deftly, and Mouth of God's canoe shot ahead. It became necessary for us to bail, for the water poured in over the unprotected sides, and the boy and I used our hats actively. Suddenly the fisherman in agonizing voice announced that we could not stay afloat. He gave no thought to our bodily plight, the racing current, and the rapacious sharks, but laid stress on our freight.

"*Aue!*" The rum will be lost!" he shouted, as the canoe weltered deeper, and then, without ado, both he and Exploding Eggs leaped into the brine. The canoe staggered and rose, and, after freeing it from water, I paddled it to shore, while the pair swam alongside, watching the precious burden.

All night the torrent roared near my home. The big boulders rolled down the rocky bed, groaning in travail. The solid shot of cocoanut and breadfruit, sped by the gale, fell on my iron roof while the furious rain was like

cannister. The trees made noises as a sailing ship in a storm, singing wildly, whistling as does the cordage, and the crash of their fall sounding as the freed canvas banging on the yards. Sleep was not for me, but I smoked and wrote, and listened to the chorus of angered nature until daybreak.

In the first light I saw Father David, in *soutane* and surplice, attended by two barelegged acolytes, fording the breast-high river. He held aloft the golden box containing the sacred bread, and one of the acolytes carried a bell of warning. Paro had the black leprosy, and in his hut far up the valley, on his mat of suffering, waited for the comfort of communion. All day three priests moved up and down urging the people to confess and "make their Easter."

Titihuti, the magnificently tattooed matron, went with me to the ceremony of *Honi Peka*, the Kissing of the Crucifix. Honi really meant to rub noses or smell each other's faces, for the Marquesans had no labial kiss. The Catholic church was well filled, and each native in turn approached the railing of the channel, and rubbed his nose over the desolate figure of the Savior. It was a wonderful magic to them. The next day, Good Friday or *Venini Tapu,* I asked Great Fern what event that day commemorated.

"Ietu-Kirito was killed by his enemies, the tribe of Iuda," he replied, as he might relate a tribal feud in these islands.

Holy Saturday was a joyous holiday, and on Easter Sunday the climax of the feasting and merriment came. The communion-rail was crowded, many complying

Photo from Underwood and Underwood

The Coral road and the traders' stores

Photo by Brown Bros.

Scene on beach a few miles west of Papeete

with the church compulsion of taking the sacrament once a year under pain of mortal sin. There was compensation for celibacy and exile in Father David's expression of delight as he put into each communicant's mouth the host. He was the leading actor in a divine drama, the conversion by his few words of consecration of a flour wafer into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. The histrionic was mixed with and a moving part of his exaltation.

He gave to all, including Peyral and me, the only white attendants, a little loaf of bread he had blessed; *faraoa benetitio* in Marquesan, or flour *benedicto.* Ah Suey took communion, and after mass hurried to me. The reputed murderer of Wagner, the American, was prideful because he was the baker of the *faraoa benetitio.*

"How you likee that bleadee?" he asked me. "My bake him bleadee, pliest make him holee. Bimeby me ketchee heaven," he said in all seriousness.

Titihuti, my neighbor, joined me to walk to our homes, and, knowing her to miss no masses on Sundays, I asked her why she had not received the sacrament. She said she had never partaken of it, that she had yet to make her first communion of the Lord's supper.

"But, Titihuti," I remonstrated, "you know that you are in danger of hell-fire. You believe in the Catholic doctrine, you say, and despite that you disregard its strict order."

Titihuti I realized was a heathen, still full of animist superstitions, and I was not unprepared to hear her answer:

"If I took the host into my mouth I would die. The

manakao would seize me. I will wait until I am about to die, and then *Père* David will give me the *viaticum*, and I will go straight to *aki*."

The *manakao* is a demon, and *aki* is paradise. Titihuti was intending to take the chance that kings and others took in the early days of Christianity, when, being taught that baptism wiped out all sins, they kept an alert clergyman always near them to sprinkle them and speed them to heaven, and meanwhile they sinned as they pleased.

By noon the entire village was chanting and dancing. The unusual removal of the restriction against beverages made Easter a pagan rout. The natives became uninhibited, if not natural, for a few hours. Several times the governor had had groups at his palace to give exhibitions of their aboriginal dances, but this feast-day he extended a general invitation to a levee. Fifty or sixty men or women enjoyed the utmost hospitality. The young ruler was bent on seeing their fullest expression of mirth, without any restraint of sobriety. The noise of their songs echoed to the mission, where the nuns prayed that some brand might be spared from the holocaust. Swaggering chiefs and beauteous damsels abandoned themselves to the spirit of the day. The dances were without order. Whenever a man or woman felt the urge they sprang to their feet and began the *tapiriata*. Under the palms, upon the verandas, in the *salle á manger*, in every corner of the palace and its grounds, the people, astonished at such unwonted freedom and such lavish bounty, showed their appreciation in movements of their bodies and legs. The fairest girls surrounded the host, and with sinuous circlings and a

thousand blandishments entertained and thanked him. The chants by the elders were of his greatness. The young sang of passion.

From the hill near the cemetery where Guillitoue, the anarchist, dwelt, sounded the drums. I was the especial guest there in the afternoon, and those who were not too deep in the pool of pleasure at the palace climbed the mountain. The orator had built a shelter of bamboo and cocoanut leaves, graceful and clean, and upon its carpet of leaves we sat. Guillitoue in a loin-cloth and black frock-coat moved about among the three score with a *dame-jeanne* in each hand, and poured rum or wine at request. Occasionally he broke into a wild *hula,* grotesque as he whirled about with the wickered bottles at arms-length. From other valleys whites and natives had come to the *koina.* Thirty horses were tied to the cemetery railing. Amiable gaiety and ludicrous baboonery passed the afternoon.

Frederick Tissot, a storekeeper at Puamau, a Swiss in his fifties, ten years in the Foreign Legion of Algiers, a worker upon the Chicago Exposition buildings in the early nineties, and seventeen years here, spoke of the "good time" when he worked at Zinkand's restaurant in San Francisco.

"I drank thirty quarts of beer a day. I was cook, and the bartenders stood in with me for *bonnes bouches.* I never tasted solid food. I had soup and booze. I nearly died in a year, and had to leave."

He sighed at the memory of those golden days. Later I saw him falling off his horse, and laid upon a mat in a native house.

James Nichols, son of a Chicagoan, dignified, tall and

thin, almost white, with side-whiskers, a black cutaway, overalls, and bare feet, a shoeless butler for all the world, had a tale for me of his father's marrying in Tahiti a member of the royal family of Pomaré, and of himself being born on Christmas Island.

"A wild island that," said the quasi-butler in English. "Captain Cook discovered it when he was steering north from Borabora on Christmas day. He stayed there a few weeks and saw an eclipse of the sun. He took away three hundred turtles. When I lived there they melted cocoanuts into oil, and my father was the cooper. Cook had planted cocoanuts there. It is an atoll, a lonely place, and I was glad to leave. I learned English from my father, and married a Paumotu lady. I was in Tahiti until eight years ago, when the cyclone wiped me out. Here I work for the mission, making copra, and I am the tinker and tinsmith. Here 's looking at you!"

Jensen, the young and engaging Dane, who will never return to civilization, trod a measure with a charming girl from Hanamenu.

"The clan of the Puna has left its bare *paepaes* all over her valley," he said. "She is the last."

At dark the cavalcade reeled down the hill, leaving Pierre Guillitoue sleeping beside the drum. Despite his late fifties and his, to say the least, irregular way of living, Pierre is strong and healthy.

Captain Cook marveled in his diary that "since the arrival of the ship in Batavia [Java] every person belonging to her has been ill, except the sailmaker, who was more than seventy years old; yet this man got drunk every day while we remained there."

A white man lured away the consort of Ahi, an agreeable young man much in love. I found the lorn husband screaming in grief.

"Tahiatauani, my wife, my wife!" he cried out. The Marquesan weeps with facility. Hour after hour this stalwart fellow let fall tears, lying on the ground in agony. Then he rose and said no more about it.

Easter Sunday went out in a blaze of riotous glory. I saw Ah Suey after nightfall inquiring anxiously and angrily for his daughter. The nuns had reported to him that she had failed to appear for vespers. That night in the breadfruit-grove by the High Place they enacted the old orgies of pre-Christian days. Thirty men and women, mostly young, sang the ancient songs and danced by the lights of lanterns, of candlenuts and fagots, and to the sound of the booming drums.

I sat at wine the next day with Father David in the mission-house. It was bare and ugly as all convents, having the scant, ascetic, uncomfortable atmosphere that monks and nuns dwell in all over the world—no ornaments, no good pictures, no ease. Stark walls, stiff chairs, and the staring, rude crucifix over the door. The apostolic vicar censured the Government severely. He plucked his long, black beard nervously, and spoke his feelings in the imperious manner of a mortal who holds the keys of the kingdom of heaven, castigating fools who would n't even learn there was a door. There was no trace of personal pride.

"The government here and in France is unjust to the church. We suffer from the impiety and wickedness of French officials. The people of France are right at heart, but the politicians are Antichrists. The

Protestants are bad enough, but the French are Catholics, or should be. This young governor here is a veritable heathen, and has shown the people the road to hell again, when they had hardly trod the *via trita, via tuta.* He and Bauda are godless men. Monsieur, rum is forbidden to be given to a Marquesan, yet the valley floats in rum. I know that to get copra made one must stretch the strict rod of the law a trifle, but not to drunkenness, nor to dances of the devil, dances, that, frowned upon, might be forgotten."

The governor, *Commissaire* Bauda, and I dined that night on the palace veranda, and afterward we had an animated discussion. I wrote it down verbatim:

GOVERNOR. What was it *Père* David said to you, *mon ami?*

I. He said that the Catholic church was badly treated by the officials here.

GOVERNOR. Yes, he wants another great slice of land. Oh, that church is insatiable! One of my predecessors, Grosfillez, fought them. Here is his report in the archives: He says that, contrary to their claims that they have caused the republic to be loved here, that they have taught the Franch language, and have raised the natives from savagery, from immorality and evil manners, the facts are that they have not changed a particle the morals of the Marquesans, that they taught in their schools a trifling smattering of French, and that they did not make France loved and respected, but sought the domination of their order, the Picpus Congregation, at the expense of the Government. This domination they forced in the early days at the point

of the bayonet, to the sacrifice of the lives of French officers and soldiers.

BAUDA. That is true here and everywhere we French have gone. We have died to spread the power of the church. *Nom d'un chien!* Six campaigns in Africa, me! *Et pire alors!* Did not General La Grande pin this decoration on me?

GOVERNOR. Here is the very letter of Grosfillez to the authorities. He says that he visited the school at Tai-o-hae, and that when he spoke to the pupils, many of them three or four years in the school, the good sister asked permission to translate his simple words into *canaque* so they could understand. *Sapristi!* Is that teaching French? Is not the calendar of the church here filled with foolishness, and almost all in *canaque? Hein?* Read this:

The governor thrust into my hands the almanac written by Father Simeon Delmas, of Tai-o-hae, and published by the mission. It was in hektograph, neatly and beautifully written, and contained the religious calendar of the year, and sermons, admonitions, and anecdotes, in Marquesan, with a small minority in French; a photograph of Monseigneur Etienne Rouchouze, former vicar apostolic to Oceanica, with praise for his career; an anecdote of Bernadette of Lourdes, the famous peasant girl to whom the Virgin Mary appeared, together with a list of the apparitions of the Virgin in France, beginning in 1830, the other dates being '46, '58, '71, and '76; a prayer to Joan of Arc, with an attack on Protestantism (*Porotetane*) for burning her, and something about the Duke of Guise; a stirring ar-

ticle on Nero's persecution of the Christians; an account of the Fall of the Bastille; a comparison between Clovis, king of France, and Napoleon; a tale of Charles V; and a table showing that the Catholic church had established missions in all the inhabited islands of this group since 1858, and giving the number of children in the schools when they were closed by the government as clerical.

"The mountain groaned and brought forth a mouse, a soldier," said the almanac.

"That is treason," said the governor, looking over my shoulder, "and what has all that foolishness to do with a dying race that does not know what it means? The church has done nothing for these people. They are not changed except for the worse. What has the church done for their health? Nothing. My predecessor wanted to stop the eating of *popoi*. He knew that it is dirty, not healthful, and the promiscuous way of eating it spreads disease. The church fought him and said *popoi* was all right. France! Have we not suffered enough by that church since the Edict of Nantes? Since time immemorial? The church is a corporation, selfish, scheming, always against any government it does not control. It has been the evil genius of France. Only Napoleon harnessed the beast and made it do his work, but it saw his humbling. The priests tell the *canaques* the Government is against the church, and that the church is in the right; that it is the duty of every Catholic to love the church first, because the church is Christ. They do not preach disaffection. *Peut-être, non.* But they do not preach affection.

I. But you must admit that these priests lead lives of self-sacrifice; that personally they gain nothing. A meager fare and hard work. They visit the sick——

GOVERNOR. Visit the sick? They do that, and they bury the dead. But they do nothing to better conditions. We teach sanitation. The priests are themselves either ignorant or neglectful of sanitation. Their calendars, their tracts, their preaching, say not a word about health, cleanliness; nothing about the body, but all about the soul, about duties to the church. I am here primarily to study and aid the lepers, the consumptives and the other sick. To try and halt the disease which has killed thousands of unborn children, and the tuberculosis which takes most of the Marquesans in youth. I am a soldier, experienced in Africa, used to leprosy, and the care of natives. In Africa the church gives nothing to the people but its ritual. What has the church done here after seventy years?

I. Ah, governor, that is the very question *Père* David asked me as to the Government. He says they looked after the lepers when they had a free hand here.

GOVERNOR. Looked after them. They were not physicians. Those men are peasants crammed with a pitiful theology. They shall have nothing from me but the law.

He attacked the intermezzo of "Cavalleria Rusticana" on his flute, as Many Daughters arrived. Over her ear was a sprig of fern, and about her neck a string of fragrant nuts. Her very large eyes were singularly brilliant.

"C'est toi qui pousse le pu me metai." she complimented and tutoyed. *"C'est toi qui n'a pas la pake?*

It is thou who playest the flute wonderfully. It is thou who has not any tobacco?"

"Ah, *ma fille,* you are well? You will have a drop of absinthe?" said the governor.

"With pleasure; I am as dry as the inside of an old skull."

"But, my friend," I remonstrated with the executive, aside. "She is a leper. Her sister is, too. Are you not afraid? She drinks from our glasses."

"Me? I am a soldier, and a student of leprosy. It is my hobby. It is mysterious, that disease. I watch her closely."

If the apostolic vicar felt keenly his inability to manage the affairs of the village and the islands to suit his ideas of morality and religion, so did the Protestant pastor. My house was very near the mission, and it was some days after I had arrived before I went to the dissenting church, half a mile across the valley. Monsieur Paul Vernier, the Protestant pastor, had been many years in the Marquesas. He was respected by the ungodly. Guillitoue hailed him as a brother, anarchist and infidel though he was himself. Vernier alternated between hunting souls to save and bulls to shoot, for he was a very son of Cush, and his quest of the wild cattle of the mountains had put him upon their horns more than once. Salvation he held first, and he was canny in copra, but many nights he lay upon the tops of the great hills when pursuit of game had led him far.

Vernier had a background, for, though born in Tahiti, his father had been a man of culture and his mother a charming Frenchwoman, whose home in Tahiti was memorable to visitors. Vernier had devoted his life to

the Marquesans, and lived in this simple atmosphere without regret for Tahiti. The apostolic vicar said that Vernier was Antichrist made manifest in the flesh, but that was on account of the *odium theologicum,* which here was as bitter as in Worms or Geneva of old. The spirit of *Père* David was pierced by the occasional defections from his flock caused by the proselytizing of Vernier. Before I met him I had gone to his church with Great Fern and Apporo. It was a box-like, red-wood building, its interior lacking the imagery and coloring of the Roman congregation. The fat angels of Brother Michel, the cherubim and seraphim in plaster on the *façade* of Father David's structure were typical of the genius of that faith, round, smiling, and breathing good will to the faithful. Protestantism was not in accord with the palms, the flowers, and the brilliancy of the sunlight. Thirty made up the congregation, of whom fourteen were men, twelve women, and four children, though the benches would seat a hundred. The women, as in the Catholic church, wore hats, but I was the only person shod.

Men and women sat apart. During the service, except when they sang, no man paid any attention to the preacher, nor did but three or four of the men. They seemed to have no piety. The women with children walked in and out, and four dogs coursed up and down the aisle. No one stirred a hand or tongue at them.

Fariura, a Tahitian preacher, who replaced Vernier, was a devout figure in blackest alpaca suit and silk tie, but barefooted. As he stood on a platform by a deal table and read the Bible, I saw his toes were well spread, which in this country was like the horny hand of the

laborer, proof of industry. Climbing the cocoanut-trees made one's toes ape one's fingers in radiation.

Tevao Kekela led the singing in a high-pitched coppery voice, and those who sang with her had much the same intonation and manner. Often the sound was like that of a Tyrolean yodel, and the lingering on the last note was fantastic. They sang without animation, rapidly, and as if repeating a lesson. In the Catholic church the natives were assisted by the nuns. These words were, of course, Marquesan, and I copied down a stanza or two:

Haere noara ta matorae
Va nia i te ea tiare,
Eare te pure tei rave,
Hiamai, na roto i te,
Taehae ote merie?
O te momona rahi
O te paraue otou, ta mata noaraoe?
Momona rahi roa
O te reira eiti to te merie?
Parau mai nei Ietue
Etimona Peteroe tia mai nioe,
Haa noara vau i tei nei po
Areva tuai aue.

Fariura prayed melodiously and pleadingly for ten minutes, during which Tevao Kekela's father never raised his head but remained bowed in meditation. A tattooed man in front of me bent double and groaned constantly during the invocation. The others were occupied with their thoughts.

Then said Fariura, "*Ma teinoa o Ietu-Kirito, Metia*

kaoha nui ia, in the name of Jesus Christ, a good day to all the world."

He began his hour's sermon. The discourse was about Rukifero and his fall from Aki, and I discovered that Rukifero was Lucifer and Aki was paradise. He described the fight preceding the drop as much like one of the old Marquesan battles, with bitter recriminations, spears, clubs, and slings as weapons, and Jehovah narrowly escaping Goliath's fate. In fact, the preacher said He had to dodge a particularly well-aimed stone. Fariura, Kekela, Terii, the catechist, and his wife, Toua, received communion, with fervent faces, while the others departed, lighting cigarettes on the steps, some mounting horses, and the women fording the river with their gowns rolled about their foreheads.

The preacher shook hands with me, the only white. He was in a lather from the heat and his unusual clothes, and the rills of sweat coursed down his body. His pantomime of the heavenly faction fight had been energetic. I took him to my house for a swig of rum, and we had a long chat on the activities of the demon, and ways of circumventing his wiles.

Men like Vernier were not deceived by dry ecclesiasticism. They knew how little the natives were changed from paganism, and how cold the once hot blast of evangelism had grown. Religion was for long the strongest tide in the affairs of the South Seas both under the heathen and the Christian revelation. Government was not important under Marquesan communism, for government is mostly concerned with enforcing opportunity for acquisitive and ambitious men to gain and

hold wealth and power. In the days of the *tapus* gods and devils made sacred laws and religious rites. The first missionaries in the Marquesas, who sailed from Tahiti, were young Englishmen, earnest and confident, but they met a severe rebuff. They relate that a swarm of women and girls swam out to their vessel and boarded it.

"They had nothing on," says the chronicle, "but girdles of green ferns, which they generously fed to the goats we had on board, who seemed to them very strange beings. The goats, deprived for long of fresh food, completely devastated the garments of the savage females, and when we had provided all the cloth we had to cover them, we had to drive the others off the ship for the sake of decency."

Harris, one of the English missionaries, ventured ashore, and the next morning returned in terror, declaring that nothing would induce him to remain in the Marquesas. He feared for his soul. He said that despite his protestations and prayers the girls of the valley had insisted on examining him throughout the night hours to see if he was like other humans, and that he had to submit to excruciating intimacies of a "diabolical inspiration." Crooks, Harris's partner, dared these and other dangers and remained a year. Crooks said that in Vaitahu, the valley in which Vanquished Often and Seventh Man Who Wallows in the Mire lived, there were deified men, called *atuas,* who, still in life, wielded supernatural power over death, disease, the elements, and the harvests, and who demanded human sacrifices to appease their wrath. Crooks believed in

the supremacy of Jehovah, but, like all his cloth then, did not doubt diabolism and the power of its professors.

For half a century American and English centers of evangelism despatched missionaries to the Marquesas, but all failed. The *tapus* were too much feared by the natives, and the sorcerers and chiefs held this power until the sailors and traders gradually broke it. They sold guns to the chiefs, and bought or stole the stone and wooden gods to sell to museums and collectors. They ridiculed the temples and the *tapus,* consorted with the women, and induced them for love or trinkets to sin against their code, and they corrupted the sorcerers with rum and gauds. They prepared the ground for the Christian plow, but it was not until Hawaiian missionaries took the field that the harvest was reaped. Then it was because of a man of great and loving soul, a man I had known, and whose descendants I met here.

I was picking my way along the bank of a stream when a deep and ample pool lured me to bathe in it. I threw off my *pareu* and was splashing in the deliciously cool water when I heard a song I had last heard in a vaudeville theater in America. It was about a newly-wedded pair, and the refrain declared that "all night long he called her Snookyookums." The voice was masculine, soft, and with the familiar intonation of the Hawaiian educated in American English. I swam further and saw a big brown youth, in face and figure the counterpart of Kamehaemeha I, the first king of Hawaii, whose gold and bronze statue stands in Honolulu. He was washing a shirt, and singing in fair tune.

"Where's your Snookyookums?" I asked by way of introduction.

He was not surprised. Probably he heard and saw me before I did him.

"Back on Alakea Street in Honolulu," he replied, smilingly, "where I wish I was. You 're the *perofeta* [prophet] they talk about. I been makin' copra or I'd been see you before. My name is Jimmy Kekela, and I was born here in that house up on the bank, but I was sent to school in Honolulu, and I played on the Kamehameha High scrub team. The only foot-ball I play now is with a cocoanut. I had a job as chauffeur for Bob Shingle, who married a sister of the Princess Kawananakoa, but my father wrote me to come back here. I'll wring out this shirt, and we'll go up and see my folks."

The Kekela home was a large, bare house of pine planks from California raised a dozen feet on a stone *paepae.* Unsightly and unsuitable, it was characteristic of the architecture the white had given the Marquesan for his own graceful and beautiful houses of hard wood, bamboo, and thatch, of which few were left. I wrung out my *pareu,* replaced it, and scrambled up the bank with him. The house was in a cocoanut forest, the trees huge and lofty, some growing at an amazing angle owing to the wind shaping them when young. They twisted like snakes, and some so approached parallelism that a barefooted native could walk up them without using his hands, by the mere prehensility of his toes and his accustomed skill. In front of the steps to the veranda of the home were mats for the drying of the copra, and a middle-aged man, very brown and

Tahiatini, Many Daughters, the little leper lass

François Grelet, the Swiss, of Oomoa

stout, was turning over the halves of the cocoanut meat to sun them all over.

"My father," said Jimmy to me, and *"Perofeta"* to him. He shook hands gingerly in the way all people do who are unaccustomed to that greeting, and said, *"Kaoha!"* My answer, *"Aloha nui oe!"* surprised him, for it was the Hawaiian salute. On the veranda I was presented to the entire Kekela family, four generations. By ones and twos they drifted from the room or the grounds. Hannah, the widow of Habuku, was very old, but was eager to talk.

"I am a Hawaiian," she said in that language, "and I have been in Atuona, on this piece of land, sixty years. My husband brought me here, and he was pastor in that church till he died. *Auwe!* What things went on here then! I have seen many men being carried by toward the *Pekia,* the High Place of Atuona, for roasting and eating. That was in war time, when they fought with the people of Taaoa, or other valley. Kekela and my husband with the help of God stopped that evil thing. Matanui, a chief, came to Hawaii in a whale-ship, and asked for people to teach his people the word of the true God. Four Hawaiians listened to Matanui, and returned with him to Hanavave, where the French priest Father Olivier, is now. A week later a French ship arrived with a Catholic priest. *Auwe!* He was angry to find the Protestants and tried to drive them out. They stayed with the help of the Lord, though they had a hard time. Then Kekela and we came, and we have seen many changes. He was a warrior, and not afraid of anything, even the devil. There are his sons, Iami and Tamueli, and his grandsons and granddaughters

and their children. We are Hawaiian. We have no drop of Marquesan blood in us. Did you know Aberahama Linoconi?"

Hannah lifted herself from the mat on the floor, and brought from the house a large gold watch, very heavy and ornate, of the sort successful men bought fifty years ago. It was inscribed to James Kekela from Abraham Lincoln in token of his bravery and kindness in saving the life of an American seaman, and the date was 1864.

"That watch," she said, "was given to Kekela by the big chief of America. When he died he gave it to his son, Tamueli. Tell the prophet why Aberahama Linoconi gave it to your grandfather, Iami!"

Jimmy, the former chauffeur, tried to persuade his uncle, Samuel, a missionary on another island, to tell the story, but finally himself narrated it in English.

"Grandfather Kekela was at Puamau, across this island, when he got this watch. He had been at Puamau some years and teachin' people stop fightin' an' go church, when a whale-ship come in from Peru, an' shot up the town. The Peru men killed a lot of Marquesans, and stole plenty of them to work in the mines like slave. They had guns an' the poor Puamau native only spear and club, so that got away with it good an' strong. Well, nex' year come American whale-ship, an' the mate come up the valley to ketch girl. He saw girl he love an' chase her up the valley. The Puamau people let him go, an' ask him go further. Then they tie him up and beat him like the Peru people beat them, and then they got the oven ready to cook him. The chief of Puamau come tell my grandfather what they goin' do, an' he was some sore. He put on his Sunday clothes he

bring from Hawaii, an' high collar an' white necktie, an' he go start something. He was young and not afraid of all hell. The mate was tied in a straw house, an' everybody 'roun' was getting paralyzed with *namu enata*—you know that cocoanut booze that is rougher than sandpaper gin in Hawaii.

"They were scarin' the mate almost to death when grandfather come along. The mate could see the *umu* heatin' up, and the stones bein' turned over on which he was goin' to be cooked. Grandfather went in the hut. The mate was lyin' on his back with his hands an' feet tied with a *purau* rope, an' his face was as white as a shirt. I remember grandfather used to say how white his face was. Kekela knelt down an' prayed for the mate, an' he prayed that the chief would give him his life. He prayed an' prayed, and the chief listen an' say nothin'. 'Long toward mornin' the chief could n't hold out no longer, an' said if grandfather would give him the whale-boat he brought from Hawaii, his gun, an' his black coat, he would let him go. Grandfather handed them all over, an' took the mate to our house, and cured his wounds, and finally got him on a boat an' away. It was no cinch, for the American ship had sailed away, and he had to keep the mate till another ship came. Many time the young men of Puamau tried to get the mate, to eat him, an' when another ship arrived, an' Kekela put the mate on board, they followed in their canoes to grab him. They pretty near were killin' grandfather for what he did.

"The mate must have told the Pres'ent of United States about his trouble here, for grandfather got a bag of money, this watch, a new whaleboat, an' a fine black

coat brought him by an American ship with a letter from Mr. Lincoln. Father wrote back to Pres'ent Lincoln in Hawaiian, an' thank him proper."

"He must have lived to be a very old man," I said, "because I was in *Kawaiahao* Church in Honolulu when he preached. He was asking for money for this church, and he took out the watch Lincoln gave him, and banged it on the pupit so that we thought he would break it. He was greatly excited. I wrote a piece about his sermon in the Honolulu paper and it was printed in the *Nupepa Kukoa,* the Hawaiian edition of the *Honolulu Advertiser.*"

Samuel Kekela leaped to his feet and rushed into the house, from which he came with a yellowed copy of the *Nupepa Kukoa,* containing the article, with Kekela's picture. To my own astonishment I read that the fourteen Hawaiians of the Kekela families who had accompanied the aged pioneer to Honolulu had journeyed in a schooner captained by my own shipmate, Lying Bill. I had seen the schooner in Honolulu Harbor.

Here was a remarkable group, a separate and alien sept, which, though living since before Lincoln's Presidency in this wild archipelago, had preserved their Hawaiian inheritances and customs almost intact. This had been due to the initial impetus given them by their ancestor, and it had now ceased to animate them, so that they were declining into commonplace and dull copra makers, with but a tiny spark of the flame of piety that had lighted the soul of their progenitor.

"I am not the man my father was," said John, the father of Jimmy. "I am an American because I am a

Hawaiian citizen. My father had us all sent to Hawaii to be educated and to marry."

The old Kekela had been a patriarch in Israel. Not alone had he lessened cannibalism and the rigidity of the *tapu* in the "great, cannibal isle of Hiva-Oa," but he had instructed them in foreign ways. He had acquired lands, and now this family was the richest in the Marquesas. Only the Catholic mission owned more acres. They were proud, and convinced that they were anointed of the Lord, though Jimmy, being young, had no interest at all in religion. If Kekela the first had not been a missionary he would have been a chief or a capitalist. Hannah showed me the photographs of the kings and queen of Hawaii since Kamehameha IV with their signatures and affectionate words for Kekela. Now they were disintegrating, and another generation would find them as undone as the Marquesans. The contempt of government, trader, and casual white for all religion had affected them, who for two generations had been Christian aristocrats and leaders among a mass of commoners and admiring followers. The ten commandments were as dead as the *tapus,* and the church had become here what it is in America, a social and entertainment focus for people bored by life. The German philosopher has said that the apparent problem of all religions was to combat a certain weariness produced by various causes which are epidemic. Christianity for civilized people may be "a great storehouse of ingenuous sedatives, with which deep depression, leaden languor, and sullen sadness of the physiologically depressed might be relieved," but for the Marquesans it had been a narcotic, perhaps easing them into the grave dug by

the new dispensation brought by civilized outsiders. The gentle Jesus had been betrayed by the culture that had developed in his name, but which had no relation to his teaching or example. These good-willed Kekelas were as feeble to arrest the decay of soul and body of their charges as was the excellent Pastor Vernier or the self-sacrificing Father David. In the dance at the governor's the flocks, at least, had an expression, corrupted as it was, of their desire for pleasure and forgetfulness of the stupid present.

CHAPTER XXI

Paul Gauguin, the famous French-Peruvian artist—a rebel against the society that rejected him while he lived, and now cherishes his paintings.

ABOVE the village of Atuona was the hill of Calvary, as the French named the Catholic cemetery. Often in the late afternoon I went there to watch the sun go down behind the peak of Temetiu, and to muse over what might come into my mind. My first visit had been with Charles Le Moine, the school teacher of Vaitahu, and the only painter living in the Marquesas. We had gone to search for the grave of Paul Gauguin, the famous French-Peruvian artist, and had found no trace of it.

"That woman who swore to keep it right has buried another lover since," said Le Moine, cynically.

A small man, with a long French nose, a red, pointed beard and mustache, twinkling blue eyes, and dressed in faded denim, Le Moine, though many years in these archipelagos, was out of the Latin Quarter. Two front teeth missing, he had a childish air; one thought his whiskers might be a boy's joke. He was a *blageur* about life, but he was very serious about painting, and utterly without thought of else.

"I work at anything the Government will give me to earn leisure and a bare living so as to paint here," he said.

Alas! Le Moine was not a great artist. His pic-

tures were so-so. Doubtless the example and fame of Gauguin inspired him to achieve. We had often talked of him.

"When he died," said Le Moine, "I was here, and I attended the night services in the church over his remains. The chief *gendarme* or *agent special,* like Bauda now, took charge of his house and effects. You may imagine the care he took when I tell you that Gauguin was under sentence to prison for reviling the *gendarme* and the law. He auctioned off everything with a jest, and made fun of the dead man and his work. He said to us: 'Gauguin is dead. He leaves many debts, and nothing here to pay for them, but a few paintings without value. He was a decadent painter.' Gauguin would have expected that. I had only a few *sous,* but was able to buy what I needed most, his brushes and palette. Peyral got 'Niagara Falls,' as the *gendarme* shouted its name. It was Gauguin's last picture; a Brittany village in winter, snow everywhere, a few houses and trees, and the dusk in blue and red and violet tones. He made that, *mon ami,* when he was dying. It was his reaching back to his old painting ground in his last thoughts. I think Peyral sold it to Polonsky, the Tahitian banker, who was here looking to buy anything of Gauguin. Lutz got his cane, carved by Gauguin, and the other things went for a trifle, including the house, which was torn down for the lumber, because nobody here wanted a studio. I admired Gauguin, but he had nothing to do with me because I was white and of the Government. He was absorbed with the Marquesans, and to them he was all kindness and generosity. He was the simplest educated white man in

his needs I have ever known, and I myself, as you know, have few demands. Gauguin wanted drink, paint and canvas. He always kept a bottle of absinthe in a little pool by his house."

Lying Bill had said that Gauguin was a seaman.

" 'Is 'ands was as tough an' rough as mine," said Captain Pincher. " 'E 'd been to sea on merchant ships an' in the French navy. Gauguin was no bloomin' pimp like most artists. 'E knew every rope in the schooner, an' could reef an' steer. 'E looked like a Spaniard, an' 'e could drink like a Yarmouth bloater. Many a time I brought 'im absinthe to Atuona on my ship. But 'e was a 'ard worker. I used to sit with 'im sometimes when 'e 'd play 'is organ. 'E wasn't bad at it, either. Women did n't care much for 'im. 'E never made much of them, but 'e 'ad plenty. A bleedin' queer frog, 'e was."

"He was a *chic type.*" said Song of the Nightingale, the prisoner-cook of the palace. Song said *chick tippee,* but he meant that Gauguin was a good man to know. "When there was a big storm here, and all the land of the man next to him was washed away by the river, Gauguin gave him a piece. *Ea!* He gave him, too, a paper which made the land his. The family has it to-day, and they are my relatives."

Pastor Vernier, Father David, Peyral, Flag, Song of the Nightingale, and others had spoken of Gauguin, but his name never came to their lips spontaneously. Being dead ten years, he was as never having been, to the Marquesans. To Vernier his note was of small interest and to the vicar apostolic an annoyance. In these seas when a man was dead he was forgotten unless he

had left an estate, or his ghost walked. The Marquesan and the Paumotuan held the dead in great fear at times, but not in reverence. The spirit of the artist had remained with his body, and that was lost in the matted earth of the graveyard on the height. His dust had long ago united with the cocoanut-palms that rose from his burial-place on that lonely hill. The purple blossoms of the *pahue* vine, which crawled over his unmarked grave and sent its shoots to search the heart of the unhappiest of men, were the only tribute ever laid there. The woman who had vowed to keep its formal outline unbroken and to bedew it with her tears smiled at my recalling it. Gauguin here was a name's faint echo, but in America and Europe they bartered for Gauguin's pictures as if they were of gold, schools of imitators and emulators were active, and novelists and critics seized upon his utterances and deeds, his savage ways and maddening canvases, to fit fictional characters to them, or to tell over and over again the mystifying story of his career and his work. Here, among the fascinating scenes nature fashions for those who love its extravagances, he died in poverty. More is paid to-day for one of his pictures than he earned in a lifetime.

The man Gauguin persisted as a legend wherever painting or Polynesia was much discussed. There was in him a seed of anarchism, a harking back to the absolute freedom of the individual, a fierce hatred of the overlordship of money and fixed decency, of *comme il faut,* which lightened the eye of many conforming people, as a glimpse of light through a distant door in a dark tunnel. In this stark, brooding, wounded *insurrecto,* this child of France and the ardent tropic of

South America, each of us who had suffered, and rebelled, if only in our hearts, gained a vicarious expression, and an outlet for our atavistic and fearful desires. Time that had led man from the anthropoid to the artist had betrayed Gauguin. He had yielded to the impulse we all feel at times, and had tried to escape from the cage formed by heredity, habits, and the thoughts of his countrymen. Space he had conquered, and in these wilds was hidden from the eyes of civilization, but time he could not blot out, for he was of his age, and even its leader in the evolution of painting. The savage in man he let take control of himself, or willed it to be, and was spoiled by the inexorable grasp upon him of his forebears and his decades of Europe. He was saturated with the ennui of the West. He wanted to be primitive, and had to use morphine, absinthe, and organ music to remain in the East. He asserted that he wanted to be "wise and a barbarian." He was a great artist but no barbarian.

He wrote: "Civilization is falling from me little by little. Under the continual contact with pebbles my feet have become hardened and used to the ground. My body, almost constantly nude, no longer suffers from the sun. I am beginning to think simply, to feel very little hatred for my neighbor—rather, to love him. All the joys, animal and human, are mine. I have escaped everything that is artificial, conventional, customary. I am entering into the truth, into nature. In the certitude of a succession of days like this present one, equally free and beautiful, peace descends on me."

He never knew peace. His was a tortured soul and body, torn by conflicting desires, and absence of the

fame and slight fortune he craved. He had courage and stoicism. In scores of letters to his friend Montfried he complained of his fate, of his desperate poverty, his lack of painting materials, the *bourgeois* whites about him, and his lack of recognition in Europe. He wanted to return there, and Montfried had to tell him in plain terms that he would destroy by his presence in Paris any sale there was for his pictures. Gauguin realized that, for it carried out his own motto, one that he had put over his door: "Be mysterious and you will be happy!"

Gauguin was like all cultivated whites who go to the South Seas after manhood, like me, unfitted by the poisons of civilization to survive in a simple, semi-savage environment. We demand the toxins of our machine bringing-up and racial ideals, as the addict his drug. Gauguin was already forty-three when he stepped ashore at Tahiti, and fifty-three when he came to the Marquesas, but at least he had put into a proper *milieu* his portrait of himself made when he said to his opponents, in Paris: "I am a savage. Every human work is a revelation of the individual. All I have learned from others has been an impediment to me. I know little, but what I do know is my own."

Paul Gauguin was dead at fifty-five. An ancestor was a centenarian. The family was famed in its environment for its vitality, but Paul wasted his energy in bitter blows against the steel shield of society, and spoiled his body with the vices of both savage and civilized.

"He was smiling when I saw him dead," said Mouth of God, who had served him for the love of him.

That smile was his ever-brave defiance of life, but, too, a thought for France—for the France he adored, and which he dreamed of so often though it had rejected him. That last picture, painted in these humid Marquesas in his house set in a grove of cocoanut-palms and breadfruit-trees, was of Brittany and was a snow scene. He did not defeat his enemy, but sank into his last sleep content to go because the struggle had become too anguishing. He knew he was beaten, but he flew no flag of surrender. He passed alone, with only the smile as a token of his final moment of consciousness, and the emotion that stirred his soul.

As was said best by his friend and biographer, Charles Morice, Gauguin was one of the most necessary artists of the nineteenth century. His name now signified a distinctive conception of the nature of art, a certain spirit of creation and mastery of strange technique, and a revolt against established standards and methods which constituted an opposition to the accepted thoughts and morals of art—if not a school, at least a distinct class of graphic achievement. As the French say, it was a *categorie.* For the conservatives, the regular painters and critics, he had created *un frisson nouveau,* a new shudder in art, as Hugo said Baudelaire had in literature.

Gauguin was not a distinguished writer. "Noa Noa" was written by his friend, Morice, in Paris, from letters to him. The painter commented upon the book that it was "not the result of an ordinary collaboration, that is, of two authors working in common, but that I had the idea, speaking for non-civilized people, to contrast their characters with ours, and I had enough originality to

write it simply, just like a savage, and to ask Morice, for his part, to put it in civilized words." His "Intimate Journals" are actually revelatory of the man, but "Noa Noa" is a tropical dish seasoned with sophistries, though beautiful, and, to a large degree, true. It is a poetical interpretation by Morice, a Parisian, of Gauguin's adventures in Tahiti.

Gauguin spent little time in writing. Every fiber of his weakening body and every lucubration of his mind were bent on expressing himself in painting, or in clay or wood, but he thought clearly and individualistically, and wrote forcefully and with wit. He was not a poet, nor had he felicity of language.

I revived Gauguin's memory in the South Seas. Having known about him in Tahiti, I was interested to find out all I could of his brief life and sorrowful death here. Lovaina, the best known woman in the South Seas, at whose Hotel Tiaré I lived in Tahiti, spoke of Gauguin one day. She had heard a whisper between Temanu and Taata-Mata, two of her handmaids, that I might leave the Tiaré, her impossible *auberge* in Papeete, to lodge with Madame Charbonnier or Madame Fanny.

Lovaina, three quarters American by blood, but all Tahitian in looks, language, and heart, was not assured that her impossible hotel was the only possible one within thousands of miles, as it was really, and she said:

"Berina, I think more better you go see that damn house before you make one bargain. You know what Gauguin say. He have room with Madame Charbonnier, and eve'y day, some time night, she come make

peep his place. He had glass door between that room for him and for other man, and he say one day to me (I drink one Pernod with him):

" 'That *sacré* French women she make peep me. I beelong myself. I make one damn pictu'e stop that.'

"You go look for yourse'f to-day. You see that door. Gauguin say he make ugly so nobody make look."

"That Gauguin was a very happy man in my *maison,*" said Madame Charbonnier in French to me. "He and I had but one disagreement. One day a native woman accompanied him here. I knew he must have models, but I want no hussies in my house. I am a respectable citizeness of France. I looked through the glass door, and I warned him, though he had paid in advance, I must preserve my reputation. *O, la la la!* He painted that *mauvaise* picture of that very Tahitian girl on my door to spite me. *La voila!* Is it not affrighting?"

It was a double-panelled door, and a separate painting covered each; to the left a seated girl wearing a *pareu* and to the right a girl playing the *vivo,* the Tahitian flute, a female figure standing, and the white rabbit Gauguin introduced afterward into many paintings. I might have bought the door of Madame Charbonnier or somewhat similar windows and doors in another house occupied by Gauguin for a hundred francs or perhaps two or three times that much. At any rate, for an inconsiderable sum, because they had no value as examples of the painter's ability nor were they intrinsically beautiful or attractive. Stephen Haweis, a talented English artist, who was there with me, bought the

door, and W. Somerset Maugham a window, which I saw afterward in a New York gallery for sale at some thousands of dollars.

I was mentioning Gauguin's name at Mataiea, in Tahiti, at the house of the chief of that district, Tetuanui, a gentleman of charming manners and great knowledge of things Tahitian. Rupert Brooke and I had walked to the ancient *marai*, or temple, and the poet and I had tried to rebuild the ruin in our imagination. I had seen *marais* better preserved, and I had talked with many who had studied their formation and history.

This one, very famous in the annals of Tahiti, was not far from Tetuanui's home, and on it had been enacted strange and bloody sacrifices in the days of heathenry. It was on the sea-shore, and, indeed, much of it had fallen into the water, or the surf had encroached upon the land. We had spent some hours about it, and had wondered about the people who had made it their cathedral a few score years ago. Here we were living with their grandchildren. The father of the chief's father might have participated in the ceremonies there, might have seen the king accept and eat the eye of a victim, or feign to do so, for cannibalism had long passed in Tahiti even a century ago.

Walking back to Mataiea, we met the chief returning from his day's labor directing the repair of roads, for, though a chevalier of the Legion of Honor, a former warrior for the French against tribes of other islands, Tetuanui had small means, and was forced to be a civil servant of the conquerers.

"We have been to see the *marai*," said Brooke.

"Oia mau anei teie?" replied Tetuanui. "Is that so? I have not been there for a long time. The last time was with that white painter Gauguin. He lived near here, and one day I spoke of the *marai,* and he asked me to show it to him. We walked down there together, but he was disappointed that it was so broken down."

Once again the chevalier gave me a glimpse of the barbarian. He and his amiable wife took occasional boarders, and there were two San Francisco salesgirls there for a week. They were shocked at our bathing nude in the lagoon in front of the house, although we wore loin-cloths to walk to the beach and back. They complained to the chief, who was astonished, for Brooke was strikingly handsome, and the Tahitian girls were open in their praise of his beauty.

"They should have seen that Gauguin," said Tetuanui, as he begged our pardon for telling their indignation. "He was always semi-nude and often nude. He became as brown as a Tahitian in a few months. He liked to lie in the sun, and I have seen him at the hottest part of the day sitting at his easel. You know, he had a wife here in the way that the whites take our women, and one day he and she were in swimming, and came out on the road before putting on *pareus.* A good missionary complained of them—it was not quite proper, truly, and the *gendarme* warned both of them. Gauguin was furious, for he hated the *gendarmes* before that."

Ten years were gone since Gauguin, having fled from Tahiti and a fate that he could not escape, had expired here in Atuona in a singular though anguished resignation. His *atelier* and dwelling had been just below

Peyral's on the opposite side of the road I trod so often to and from the beach, and Peyral had known him as well as such a man can know a master. Mouth of God, the husband of Malicious Gossip, saw Gauguin dead in his house, and it was he who told me that Kahuiti, the recent cannibal chief, had a *tiki* made by Gauguin. I went to Taaoa, past the Stinking Springs and the house of Mademoiselle Narbonne, to see it.

I remembered that James Huneker said, "In the huts of the natives where cataloguing ceases, many pictures may be found."

Kahuiti had one, and dear to the heart of that remarkable anthropophagus. It was a striking figure of an old god, and a couple of feet square, and in the painter's most characteristic style.

When I asked him to sell it to me, he opened wide those large brown eyes which had looked a hundred times at the advancing spear, and had watched the cooking of his slain enemy. He said nothing but the words, *"Tiki hoa pii!* An image by my dear friend!"

I smoked a pipe with him, and went back to Atuona thoughtful.

Gauguin made many enemies, but he kept his friends even in death.

"Toujours tout a vous de cœur," he had signed his letters to his one or two friends, with rare sincerity.

Gauguin had deserted Tahiti because of his frequent quarrels with the representatives of the Government there, and with the church. He precipitated a similar situation in Atuona almost immediately. In his "Intimate Journals," he tells of it:

The first news that reached me on my arrival at Atuona was that there was no land to be bought or sold, except at the mission. . . . Even so, as the bishop was away, I should have to wait a month. My trunks and a shipment of building lumber waited on the beach. During this month, as you can well imagine, I went to mass every Sunday, forced as I was to play the rôle of a good Catholic and a railer against the Protestants. My reputation was made, and His reverence, without suspecting my hypocrisy, was quite willing (since it was I) to sell me a small plot of ground filled with pebbles and underbrush for 650 francs. I set to work courageously, and, thanks once more to some men recommended by the bishop, I was soon settled.

Hypocrisy has its good points. When my hut was finished, I no longer thought of making war on the Protestant pastor, who was a well-brought-up young man with a liberal mind besides; nor did I think any longer of going to church. A chicken had come along, and war had begun again. When I say *a* chicken I am modest, for all the chickens had arrived, and without any invitation. His Reverence is a regular goat, while I am a tough old cock and fairly well-seasoned. If I said the goat began it, I should be telling the truth. To want to condemn me to a vow of chastity! That's a little too much; nothing like that, Lizette!

To cut two superb pieces of rose-wood and carve them after the Marquesan fashion was child's play for me. One of them represented a horned devil (the bishop), the other a charming woman with flowers in her hair. It was enough to name her Thérèse for every one without exception, even the school-children, to see in it an allusion to this celebrated love affair. Even if this is all a myth, still it was not I who started it.

Pastor Vernier told me of his acquaintance with Gauguin and of his last days. Vernier acknowledged

that he had never been his friend. I would have known that, for to Gauguin, professors of theology were as absurd and abhorrent as he to them.

Gauguin's residence was a half mile away from Vernier's. Two years he had lived there after ten in Tahiti. Always disappointment, always bodily suffering, and the reaction from alcohol and drugs; an invalid a dozen years.

"He was a savage, but a charming man," said Pastor Vernier to me. "I could have nothing to say to him, ordinarily, and he did not seek me out. He had no respect for the law and less for the *bon Dieu.* The Catholics especially he quarreled with, for he made a caricature of the Bishop, and of a native woman, about whom there was a current scandal. It was common talk, and the natives laughed uproariously, which angered the bishop greatly. It was unfit to be seen by a savage. You can imagine it!

"I had not seen him for some time when I had a note from Gauguin, scrawled on a piece of wrapping-paper. It said:

"Will it be asking too much for you to come to see me? My sight is all of a sudden leaving me. I am very ill, and cannot move."

"I went down the trail to his house, and found Mouth of God with him, as also the old Tioka. His legs were terribly ulcerated. He had on a red loin-cloth and a green tam-o'-shanter cap. His skin was as red as fire from the eczema he had long been afflicted with, and the pain must have been very severe. He shut his lips tight at moments, but he did not groan. He talked of art for

an hour or two, passionately advocating his ideas, and without reference to his approaching end. I think he sent for me for conversation and no more. It was then he presented me with books and his portrait of Mallarmé.

"We chatted long and I was filled with admiration for the courage of Gauguin and his prepossession with painting, at the expense of his *doleur*. About a fortnight later I went back when Tioka summoned me, and found him worse, but still forgetful of everything else but his art. It was the eighth of May Tioka came again. Gauguin now was in agony. He had had periods of unconsciousness. He must have known his danger, but he talked fitfully of Flaubert and of Poe, of 'Salammbô' and of 'Nevermore.' When I said adieu he was praising Poe as the greatest poet in English.

"A few hours afterward I heard the shouts of the natives that Gauguin was dead.

" *'Haoe mate!'* they called to me. 'The white is dead.'

"I found Gauguin on his cot, one leg hanging down to the floor. Tioka was urging him in Marquesan to speak, and was rubbing his chest. I took his arms and tried to cause respiration, but in vain. He was already beginning to grow cold. Do you know, *Monsieur Americain,* that the vicar went down there at night before I was aware of it, and, though Gauguin despised him and his superstitions, forced an entrance and, had the body carried to the Catholic Cemetery, with mass, candles, and other mummeries."

The good Vicar, *Père* David, had another tale. He told it over our wine at the mission. My House of the Golden Bed was but the toss of a mango away, and we

often discussed the fathers, especially Anthony, Jerome, and Francis of Assisi.

"It is not true," he said, plucking his long, black beard nervously, as was his wont. "Gauguin was born in the church. Did he not tell me he was the descendant of a Borgia? He was at the Jesuits' school, The devil got hold of him early. Ah, that France is punished for its breaking of the Concordat. Napoleon knew what was needed. Gauguin did make much trouble here. I do not care what he did to the Government. That Government is usually atheist. But he made an obscene image of the bishop. He never entered our mission, after he had secured his land from us, and labor to build his house. He derided the sacred things of religion, and when he came to die he sent for the Protestant. I had hoped always that he would recant his atheism and change his ways. He was immoral, but then so is nearly everybody here except the fathers, and the nuns. That very pastor—Non! I guard my secret. *Mais,* it is not a secret, for all the world knows. N'importe! I close my lips."

He was determined to be charitable, but, as for me, I knew the charge well, and had disproved it by personal research. John Kekela, the Hawaiian, had sworn on the Bible given his father by Kalakaua, the last Hawaiian king, that it was a lie, and Kekela would know for sure, and would not kiss the book falsely for fear of death or, at least, the dreaded *fefe,* which makes one's legs as big as those of an elephant.

"But despite the antagonism of Gauguin to the church and his immorality, you took charge of his body and gave him a Catholic funeral," I said.

"Who am I to judge the soul of a man?" replied the vicar, deprecatingly, his right hand lifted in appeal. "He was alone in his last moments. Doubtless the Holy Virgin or perhaps even the patron of the Marquesas, the watchful Joan of Arc, aided him. Each one has his guardian angel who never deserts him. When the shadows of death darken the room, then does that angel fight with the demons for the soul of his charge. I learned that Gauguin was dead from the catechist. Daniel Vaimai. It was then evening of the day he had died, and I had been ministering to a sick woman in Hanamate, an hour's ride away. I met Daniel Vaimai at the cross-roads and he informed me of Gauguin's death. I felt deeply sorry that he had not had the holy oils in his extremity, and had not received absolution after confession, but the devil is like a roaring lion of Afrique, seeking what he may devour."

"He is especially active here," I ventured, interested as I am in all such vital matters. The vicar, who had been talking animatedly and gazing at an invisible congregation, fixed his eyes on me.

"Here in the Marquesas and wherever whites are," he replied acridly. "But to return to Gauguin! I immediately arranged for the interment of the dead man the next morning. In this climate decay follows death fast. As a matter of fact, some of us, including two of the *Frères de la doctrine chrètienne,* had hastened to Gauguin's house when his death was announced the day before. They had planned his funeral for two o'clock the next morning, but we made it a trifle earlier, and removed him to the church of Atuona shortly after one. There we had mass for the dead, and did the poor

cadavre all honor, or, rather, we thought of the soul that had fled to its punishment or reward. We carried the body to Calvary and put it in the earth."

"I find no stone nor any mark at all of his grave," I said.

"Peut-être, that may well be," said the vicar calmly. "I do not know if one was placed. He had no kin here nor intimates other than natives."

"But Pastor Vernier says Gauguin had asked long ago to be buried with civil rites only, and that he had wanted to assist in them. He says that you deceived him as to the hour of removal to the church, and that when he arrived at two o'clock Gauguin was already in the mission which he could not enter."

The vicar shrugged his shoulders.

"I cannot enter into a controversy as to what Vernier says. Gauguin was of Catholic parentage. Have I not said he claimed to be a descendant of a Borgia, and Borgias were popes? What more or less could the church have done? Stern as that Mother may be to wayward children in life, she spares no effort even in death to comfort those remaining, and to help by prayer and ceremony the spirit that wrestles with purgatory. We ever give the benefit of the doubt. A second before he succumbed to that heart stroke, or the laudanum, Gauguin may have asked for forgiveness. Only God knows that, and in His infinite mercy He may have bestowed on him that final penitence. You will not forget the thief on Calvary."

That villainous Song of the Nightingale might have given success to my quest for the grave of Gauguin. I cannot remember now that I ever mentioned to him

my looking for it. He pointed it out to a recent governor of the Marquesas Islands, Dr. L. Sasportas, who, in a letter to Count Charles du Parc, now of San Francisco, tells of it:

Gauguin, of whom you wrote, had not departed from the tradition of adopting native customs; and unfortunately, his influence among the Marquesans was rather bad than good. I have gathered some details about him, which may interest those who know that sad end of this talented painter who came to the Marquesas, to escape the civilized world, its taxes, ugliness and evils. He found here the government, police, the tax collector, etc. If these islands enjoy an eternal summer, disease is not lacking in them.

Gauguin, morphinomaniac, lived close to a bottle of absinthe that he kept fresh in his well. He was condemned to serve in jail for three months, and one morning he was found dead near-by a phial of laudanum. He committed suicide. Nothing remains of him. His house has been demolished, and his land is a field of potatoes. His last paintings have been carried away, not by admirers, but by merchants who did not ignore the value of his work.

My wife and I went once to a little French cemetery which lies on top of the hill and among a hundred Christian tombs we looked for Gauguin's. About three quarters of the crosses, worm-eaten, had fallen. One after the other we threw them over to find the name of Gauguin. It was in vain. After we had come down, we inquired of our cook, prisoner and drunkard, who lived here at the time of Gauguin. We learned that the tomb was for a long time abandoned. We finally found it, and we had a wreath of natural flowers that he loved so much, rose-laurel, hibiscus, gardenia and others, placed upon the spot. They are decayed now, alas, as is Gauguin.

That again was Gauguin. Fleeing from Europe,

from civilization, from the *redingote,* and even there, in that most distant isle, thousands of miles from any mainland, being pursued by the *gendarme!* Had he not abandoned Tahiti after a decade for a wilder spot, yet a thousand miles farther, hidden in a bywater of the vast ocean, and in the "great cannibal isle of Hiva-Oa" been harassed by the law and the church?

He saw there was no escape, and that, after all, the fault was in him. He demanded the impossible from a world corrupted to its horizon. He, too, could say of himself, as he wrote of the Tahitians, and then of the Marquesans:

> The gods are dead and I am dead of their death.

"He had verses on that god he made for his garden," said Le Moine. "They began:

> 'Les dieux sont mort et Atuona meurt de leur mort.'

That was it. Gauguin was like the Marquesans of his, of my, village of Atuona. Their old gods were dead, and they perished of the lack of spiritual substance.

Le Moine was to go mad, and to die, as I would have if I had not fled. The air was one of death.

> "Le soleil autrefois qui l'enflammait l'endort
> D'un sommeil désolè d'affreux sursauts de rêve,
> Et l'effroi du futur remplit les yeux de l'Eve.
> Dorée: elle soupire en regardant son sein,
> Or, stérile scellé par les divins desseins."

When I returned to America and wrote of Gauguin, I received a letter from his son;

. . . novel could n't hurt Gauguin as an artist. We men aren't insulted when apes yelp at us; but we are sometimes obliged to live amongst them, so when you defend Gauguin against the quadrumanes, you make it easier for his son to move in their midst.

I therefore thank you and beg you to believe me your most grateful friend and admirer,

EMILE GAUGUIN.

CHAPTER XXII

Monsieur l'Inspecteur des Etablissements Français de l'Oceanie—How the School House was Inspected—I Receive My Congé—The Runaway Pigs—Mademoiselle Narbone goes with Lutz to Papeete to be Married—Père Siméon, about whom Robert Louis Stevenson wrote.

ONE must admit that the processes of government in my islands were simple. Since only a couple of thousand Marquesans, of an original myriad, were alive, after three score years of colonialism, officialdom had lessened according to the mortuary statistics. Sovereignty was evidenced by the tricolor that Song of the Nightingale occasionally raised in the palace garden, while *Commissaire* Bauda and two *gendarmes* aided the merry governor in exercising a lazy authority. There was no hospital, nor school to distract the people from copra making, and, excepting for the court sessions of Saturdays, to hear moonshine cases, or a claim against Chinese rapacity, we might have thought ourselves living in an ideal state of anarchy.

One morning we awoke to the reality of empire and the solicitude of Paris. Flag, the *mutoi,* peered through the windowless aperture of my cabin, shortly after dawn, and announced, with the pompousness of a bumbailiff, that the French gunboat *Zélée* was at Tahauku, and would shortly land *Monsieur l'Inspecteur des Etablissements Français de l'Océanie.* Flag called the visitor *'Sieu Ranisepatu,* and in pantomime indicated his rank and power. The *Z*élée sent him ashore at the

stone steps of Lutz's store, and departed for Vaitahu, ostensibly for a fresh water-supply, but, as Painter Le Moine said with an oath, the commander had gone to Le Moine's adopted village, Vaitahu, to make love to Vanquished Often, the artist's model.

The inspector of colonies occupied the spare room at the palace and our pleasant parties were suspended. He was a gross, corpulent man, in a colonel's gilded uniform. One could not see his collar, front or back, for the rolls of his fat neck and his spacious beard. The *tapis* was full of troublesome affairs. The governor and Bauda had fallen out. Rum was responsible. The governor had given Taiao Koe, Flatulent Fish, one of my tattooed neighbors, a permit to buy a gallon of rum for Lutz. Flatulent Fish lightened his jug too much. *Commissaire* Bauda met him wobbling from port to starboard on his horse, and took the jug. That for Bauda, censor of morals! But the same day, during the difficult work of repairing Bauda's arm-chair, Bauda cheered the natives with rum, and two, made utterly reckless, invaded the palace garden in search of more. The inspector was stupefied, and the governor drove them away with threats of prison and indignant exclamations that such a thing had never happened before. Of course, Bauda had to let the inspector know of his action in saving Flatulent Fish from a more wobbly state, and he did so in ignorance of his chair-repairers having betrayed to the inspector his own liberality. The governor did not fancy Flatulent Fish's permit for rum being brought before the inspector's notice. So the great man had to decide whether the Governor or the *Commissaire* was supreme in rum

matters, rum, of course, being absolutely forbidden to the natives.

After two days, this matter was settled. The inspector became restless. Every day he said, "I must see the schoolhouse. It is necessary that I see that important building."

He meant a tumbledown, unoccupied cabin up the valley, a dirty, cheap, wooden building, bare planks and an iron roof.

Rain did not permit the inspector to go at once, for he did not stir out of the Governor's house while it was wet; but after three days of fair weather he said very firmly, "I will visit the schoolhouse. It is my duty and I wish to report on that."

So, with the governor, he advanced up the broken road to the river, which must be crossed to go up the valley. The river was two feet deep. There were crossing-stones placed for him, but he was stout and they were three feet apart. One must jump from one stone to the other. The governor, in boots, plunged into the purling rill. The inspector cried to the governor, *"Mais, mon brave, prenez garde aux accidents!"*

"It is not dangerous," said the governor, who in five strides had reached the other bank.

"But I may get my shoes wet," said the inspector.

"It is better to take them off," advised the governor.

"Yes, that is true. Naturally one removes one's shoes when one crosses a river on foot. And, in such a case as this, one must take chances. It is imperative that I inspect the schoolhouse. *Mais, nom d'un chien!* Where shall I sit to take off my shoes?"

The governor suggested a certain boulder, but it was

too low; another was too high. But, after inspecting many boulders, one was found that suited the *embonpoint* of the big man. He bent over, then looked at the river, and sat up straight.

"It is a wooden schoolhouse?" he queried.

"Yes, plain wood," said the executive.

"And, *par conséquence,* it has a roof and a floor and sides, and maybe some wooden desks for the scholars. Steps to enter, *n'est-ce pas?* And a *tableau noir,* to write the alphabet on. As a matter of fact, there is little difference between schoolhouses. You have seen that schoolhouse, *mon ami?"*

"Oui, Monsieur l'Inspecteur, I have seen it. It is exactly as you describe it. *Très simple,* and the blackboard is there, but a trifle disfigured."

"Ah, the blackboard is in bad condition! *Bien,* we must remedy that. I am well satisfied. I will return to your house. These stones are very hot."

The *bon homme* marched back, puffing, combing his fan-like whiskers with his fingers, with that quietly exultant air of one who has done his duty despite all risks.

The *Zélée* returning, and this being the total of his inspection, he ordered it to speed forthwith to Tahiti, where, doubtless, as in Paris, he recited the dangers and difficulties of life in the cannibal islands. He forgot to have the blackboard repaired. I learned by letter from Malicious Gossip, two years after his notation, of its deplorable state. The ingratitude of colonies toward their foster-mothers is proverbial. Our own fat men, secretaries of war, senators, and congressmen, make as cursory examinations of our American vassals in the Pacific and Atlantic, and with as little help to them.

The inspector's *congé* was almost synchronous with mine. The *Saint François* of Bordeaux, the first merchant steamship in the Marquesas, arrived from Tahiti, to swing about the ports of my archipelago and return to Papeete. My heart ached at leaving; the tendrils of the purple-blossomed *pahue*-vine were about it. How could I forsake forever my loved friends of Atuona and Vaitahu, Malicious Gossip, Mouth of God, Vanquished Often, Seventh Man Who Is So Angry, Great Fern, Ghost Girl, and the little leper lass, Many Daughters? I must make my choice, and swiftly. If I stayed much longer, I would never live again in America; the jungle would creep over me and I should lie, some day, on Calvary's hill near the lost remains of Paul Gauguin. There was Le Brunnec, the best of the whites, but he was a Breton peasant, born to the sun and simplicity and nature's riches; I was of the shade and artificiality, of pavements and libraries. Nor could I show an unabraded surface to these savage tropics as did Lutz. His Prussianism, his Lutheranism, preserved him cold, and ready to escape at fortune's opening. My Irish forebears and American generations gave me no such buckler, nor ambition.

The one passenger of the *Saint François* who came ashore on our beach weighted the balance for America. He was Brunneck, an American swimmer, diver, and boxer, whom I had seen Sarah Bernhardt kiss when at Catalina Island he rose through the clear waters of Avalon Bay to her glass-bottomed boat and presented her with an abalone shell. I traded him my coffee-pot and utensils for the memory of Sarah's moment of abandon, and Brunneck tipped the scales for me toward

Brunneck, the boxer and diver

A Samoan maiden of high caste

Photo from L. Gauthier

A village maid in Tahiti

the America he had deserted. He was an atavist in a grass skirt and a crown of ferns, hatless, purseless, a set of boxing-gloves his only impedimenta. I could not equal his serenity, that of a civilized being again in harmony with the earth. I hurried aboard the steamship in Tahauku roadstead to decide my vacillation.

By dark, the Tahauku River, into which some weary cloud had emptied, sent a menacing current down the roadstead. The steamship rolled and swung wildly. As madder grew the fresh torrent, the anchors dragged, and the vessel drifted broadside toward the rocky cliff. Steam was down and the engines would not turn. The captain yelling from the bridge, the Breton sailors in noisy *sabots,* prancing alarmedly about the decks, a search-light playing upon the rocks, and lighting the groups of natives watching from the headlands, the shouting and swearing in French and Breton with a word or two for my benefit in English, all made a dramatic incident with a spice of danger.

The *Saint François* swung until the rail on which I stood was four feet from the jagged wall. A wild chant rose from the Marquesans on shore in the moment of most peril. I made ready to leap, but soon heard the hum of the screw as it began fighting the current. We gained little by little, and, once clear of the rocks, pointed the prow for the Bordelaise Channel and comparative safety. The cargo boats had not been hoisted aboard, and they banged to pieces as, urged by the rushing river, we drove through the door of the bay and out to sea.

I lay down on a bench, and when I awoke at dawn we were heading back for Tahauku to finish loading. Ex-

ploding Eggs was beside me. I had not known he was aboard. The adventures of the night, the fires, the engines, the electric lights, and the danger had delighted him.

"Sacré!" muttered the red-faced captain at breakfast. "These Marquesas are as bad as the Paumotus."

No lighthouses, charts inaccurate, shore-guides lacking, treacherous tides, winds, currents, reefs, and passages. Lying Bill said it took "bloody near a gen'us to escape with his life after thirty years of navigation in these waters."

The Polynesians believed that souls animate flowers and plants, that these are organized beings. For pigs, they had a special heaven, *Ofetuna.* Each pig had a distinct and arbitrary name, which was never changed, though men changed their names often.

On the deck of the *Saint François* were half a dozen slender pigs that had once played about my *paepae* and were now engaged in resisting the monopolistic tendencies of Alphonse, a ram bought from the trader. By uniting, they made his habitat painful, and his outcries brought the steward, who attempted to correct the ram, but was butted into profanity and flight.

"You 're no lam' o' goodness! You 'll be chops mighty soon!" the negro shouted, and threw a pan at him. The ram bolted, knocked open a swinging port, and, followed by the pork, dived into the bay. He may have sensed the threat of the steward.

"A la chasse! A la chasse!" ordered the captain from the bridge. *"Tonnerre de Dieu!* Our meat is going ashore."

If a boat coming to the *Saint François* had not inter-

cepted the bold deserters, they would have succeeded in their break for liberty, and probably have taken to the wilds. The recovering them was no easy task, but, diverted from the rocks, they were run down, after half an hour of fierce commands through a megaphone from the captain. They were fast swimmers, being encumbered by no fat. Their adventure dispelled for me the myth that pigs cannot swim. The story ran that in swimming pigs cut their throats with their hoofs.

I had recognized in the English-African accent of the steward the lingo of the West-India negro, and oddly, I remembered having seen the man himself at Kowloon, in China, where he had been bartender at the Kowloon Hotel. With no word of French, and ten days aboard from Tahiti, the black man was bursting with conversation. Serving me with a bottle of Bordeaux beer, he spoke of his hardships, and of familiar figures of his happier days at Kowloon:

"Yes, sir, men can stand more than animiles," he said. "They can, sir, work or play. You remember that goriller that Osborne had in the Kowloon Hotel grounds? He perished, sir, from his drinking habits. He took his reg'lar with the soldiers and tourists, and his favoryte tonoc was gin and whiskey mixed, but after he was started, he would 'bibe near anything 'toxicating. You remember how big he was? Big as Sikh, that goriller was. He was a African ape like the white perfesser says he is descended from.

"Week before Chrismus, that infantry regiment in barricks, in Kowloon, kept him late every night, and I seen him climb to his house in that tree hardly able to hold onto the limbs. Chrismus eve he let nothing slip

his paws. He began with the punch—you remember, sir, the punch I used to make? and he overdone it, though he had a stummick like a India major's. He drank with the officers and he drank with the Tommies. When I opened the bar, Chrismus morning, he was dead on the ground. He had n't never been able to reach his home. Osborne gave him a Christian berrial under the comquat trees, but as sure as you 're born every officer and soldier turned up for more drink that night. Men can stand more than animiles, sir."

All morning I sat on the deck and took my fill of the scenes on either shore, while copra was hoisted aboard from canoes and boats. Exploding Eggs was examining minutely the wonders of the steamship, reporting to me occasionally some astounding discovery. Until then I had refused to consider taking him away from his people, but, in a moment of selfishness, I drew a plat of America, to attract his thirteen years,—the lofty buildings, motor-cars, telephones, ice and ice-cream, snow and sleighs, roller-skates and moving pictures. He had seen none of these, nor read of them, but, nevertheless, the fear of homesickness caused him, after a few minutes to say:

"Aoe metai, Nakohu mata!" which meant, "No good; Exploding Eggs would die!"

Characteristic of all primitive peoples was this nostalgia, and, far from being sentiment easily smothered, it was more often than physical ailment the predisposing, or even actual, cause of death when they were separated from their homes. The Pitcairn youth who died in California and the Easter Islanders who could not endure even their exile in Tahiti were examples. The

Maori Napoleon, Te Rauparaha, gazed upon his old home, Kawhia, and wept in farewell. His legendary song says:

> O my own home! Ah me! I bid farewell to you,
> And still, at distance, bid farewell.

Before noon, I was overcome by a longing to see Atuona again. The voices of the friends who had chanted their grief were in my ears. I landed at Tahauku in one of the copra boats which were coming and going, and walked along the cliffs until I came within sight of the beach where, so often, I had ridden the surf. I went at a fast pace down the hill, hoping for a familiar face. At a point overlooking the cove, that very spot Stevenson thought the most beautiful on earth, I heard shouts and merry laughter.

I moved to where I could survey the spot. There was a group of natives, half the village, at least, and in the center of the chattering crowd was Brunneck, naked to the waist, boxing with Jimmy Kekela, the Hawaiian. The yellow hair of the American gleamed against his sun-burnt skin, as he toyed with the amateur. Ghost girl, an absorbed spectator, held the wreath of the American. Mouth of God, Haabuani, and Great Fern were dancing about the circle in glee. Exploding Eggs, who had accompanied me, left me without a word, and ran to the ring. I stood fifty feet away, unnoticed. A new god had been thrown up by the sea. I returned to the *Saint François* more content to leave.

When I awoke from a siesta, in the late afternoon, I found preparations for immediate departure. The anchors were being hauled short, the hatches battened

down, and the cargo booms uphoisted. We waited only the final accounts from Lutz. He brought them himself in the last boat, in which were also Mademoiselle Narbonne and two nuns. She was again in black, and greeted me in a distraught manner with *"Kaoha!"* the native salutation, as if in her hour of departure from her own island she clung to its language. She went below to the cabins with the sisters, and only after the screw had revolved and we turned head for the sea did the three come on deck.

Tears suffused her eyes as we passed the opening of Atuona Bay. When Exploding Eggs and others, including Song of the Nightingale, shouted *"Kaoha"* to us from their canoes, she put her head upon the breast of Sister Serapoline and wept passionately. The night drew on as, after many bursts of her sad emotion, she leaned exhausted on the bosom so long her shelter. In the flooding moonlight, she slept, while the nun placidly counted her rosary.

The *Saint François,* steering in a smooth sea for Taiohae, on the island of Nuku-hiva, the captain, Lutz, and I gathered about the table for supper and wine. The vessel had narrowly escaped shipwreck in the Paumotus, and had lain for six days on a reef while the barrels of cement, intended for some improvement at Atuona, were thrown overboard to lighten her.

Lutz did not seek any moment of intimacy with me, and said nothing to explain Mademoiselle Narbonne's presence aboard. Conforming to strict native etiquette, he paid no attention to her, and a stranger would have thought he hardly knew her. Lutz said that he had

business affairs in Tahiti and had jumped at the chance of a quick passage in the steamship.

At dawn, we were off the island of Nuku-hiva; high up on a green mountain-side, we saw a silver thread which we knew to be the waterfall of Typee Valley, the valley in which Hermann Melville had lived in captivity and happiness. We rounded Cape Martens, and, as the sun lit the rocky forelands guarding the bay of Taiohae, the morning breeze brought from Typee the delicious odor of the wild flowers, the *hinano,* the *tiare,* and the *frangipani.* This beach of Taiohae, months before, I had visited in a whale-boat from Atuona. I hoped to see again my friend, the good priest, Père Siméon Delmas, who had held the citadel of God here for half a century.

In the first boat ashore went the captain and Lutz, and, when after breakfast I asked the mate to be put on land, Mademoiselle Narbonne, seeing me descending the ladder, joined me.

"Where do you go?" she asked, when we set foot on the sand.

"I have a message for Prince Stanislao from Le Brunnec," I answered.

"I must be back before the nuns miss me, but I will go with you," she said.

Leaving the settlement, we were soon on a trail with which I was familiar and reached a little wood. She took me by the sleeve.

"Attendez," she half whispered. "I am going to be married to Monsieur Lutz in Papeete. He is a foreigner, and the priest could not marry us. At Papeete

the judge can do it. The nuns are going with me to make sure. They oppose, but I am determined. It is my one chance. Tell me, American, do I make a mistake?"

"Do you love him?"

"Love him?" she said hesitatingly. "I do not know what love is. The nuns have not taught me. Always it has been Joan of Arc, or the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I want love and freedom, but I am afraid of staying there at Taaoa alone with those two old women. They are true *Canaques,* and would make me like them, and I am afraid of the convent. *Mon dieu!* I am puzzled by life!"

"Come!" I said, "you will have an hour of lightheartedness with Stanislao. I am puzzled, too."

Hardly more than a youth, Stanislao was the last of the blood royal of the family that had ruled the Marquesas. Temoana had been the only king. The Marquesans were communists, with chiefs, and had not the corroding egocentrism of nationality until the French crowned Temoana. He had been one of the few travelers from here. Kidnapped, a dime-museum man in foreign seaports, he returned on a whaler to find favor with the bishop and to be set on a Catholic throne. Prince Stanislao was not even chief of Taiohae, for a half-Hawaiian, of the Kekela tribe, had that office, and did the French policeman's chores.

We entered the house of Stanislao and met, besides him, Antoinette, an odalisque, most beautiful of dancers, who, like Ghost Girl, flitted from island to island by the grace of her charms. I had known her in the Cocoanut House in Papeete and her sister, Caroline.

Neither she nor Stanislao accepted the gospel of Christianity. Her warm blood had in it an admixture of French and Italian, giving an archness and spice to her manner and a coquetry to her eyes—black and dancing—that maddened many. In the days about the fourteenth of July, when the French at Tahiti celebrated the Fall of the Bastille, she was a prize exhibit, for then governors and bankers, deacons and acolytes, lost the grace of God.

These three, Barbe, Antoinette, and Stanislao, were extraordinary in their unity with the teeming vivid life here, the ferns and orchids and flowers on the sward, the palms and breadfruit in the grove. By the alchemy of the brilliant morning and the company of this pair of youthful lovers, Barbe's mood was suddenly transmuted into joyousness. I took an accordion off a shelf, and played the *upaupahura* of Tahiti. Without a moment's hesitation, and with no sense of consciousness, the three danced on the grass.

Carlyle praises that countryman who, matching the boast of a doctor that "his system was in high order," answered that, for his part, "he had no system."

Few mortals, it is to be feared, are permanently blessed with that felicity of "having no system"; nevertheless, most of us, looking backward on young years, may remember seasons of a light aerial translucency and elasticity and perfect freedom; the body had not yet become the prison-house of the soul, but was its vehicle and implement, like a creature of the thought, and altogether pliant to its bidding. We knew not that we had limbs, we only lifted, hurled and leapt; through eye and ear and all avenues of sense came clear, unimpeded tidings from without, and from within issued clear victorious forces. We

stood as in the center of Nature, giving and receiving in harmony with it all; unlike Virgil's husbandman, "too happy because we did not know our blessedness."

Stanislao seized the instrument and I danced. We four were the spirits of a rare and vital esthetic, a harmony with being that denied all knowledge but that of our acute and delicately-poised senses of warmth, delicious odors, fresh colors of the plants, and mutual attraction. The ship, Lutz, the nuns, heaven and hell, the *Taua* and the *Tapus* were forgotten by me and by Barbe in the glowing hour of dance and play.

Tired we threw ourselves on the grass and drank from the cocoanuts which Stanislao climbed a tree to bring us. The prince told us, with solemnity in which Marquesans speak of olden things, an incident related to him by his uncle:

"A French governor here forbade the girls to go to the war-ships in the bay. They ruined discipline, he said. Nevertheless, three daughters of a powerful chief swam out to a war vessel. The commander, discovering them in the morning, sent them ashore to the governor, who put them in prison for three days.

"Their father's rage was terrible. It had ever been the custom for the young women to visit the ships, he said, and that his daughters should be the victims of a governor's whim, abetted by French sailors themselves, was a deadly insult.

"He sent a message to the governor: 'I am a chief who has eaten my enemies all my life. I will wash the hands of my daughters in French blood.'

"The sailors were forbidden by their officers to leave the beach. They had been going up the river to bathe

in shady spots, but they were warned of danger and a line was drawn beyond which they were not to go. A guard was stationed a little higher up the stream, and for weeks the barrier was not crossed. But sailors know no authority when woman beckons,"—it has been so since Jason sought the Golden Fleece,—"and, when, through the glade, they saw the alluring forms of the three sisters, the governor's orders were damned as tyranny. They outwitted the guard and climbed the trail to the paepae of their inamoratas. The chief and his warriors trapped six of them after a struggle. One sailor, a man famed for strength, killed several with his hands. They were outnumbered and were brought, some wounded and some dead, to an altar up the valley, and there the daughters, at the command of their father, bathed their hands in the men's blood, as he had sworn. Parts of the bodies were eaten and the remains fed to the pigs.

"The governor had troops brought ashore to pursue the chief. For a year he evaded them, but then Vaekehu, the widow of Temoana, sent him word to come to Taiohae and be shot. He obeyed, of course, and met death near the hill of the fort.

"That was the palace of Queen Vaekehu," said the prince, pointing up the hill. It was by a pool, under a gigantic banyan, a lonely site, a palisade of cocoanuts and tamarinds not availing to soften the gloomy impression. Long before she died the queen forsook her royal residence for the shelter of the convent, where all day she told her beads, or sat in silent contemplation.

Bishop Dordillon who had written my dictionary, had given the queen a Trinity, a Mother of God, and a band

of saints to dwell upon, and more, a bottomless pit of fire, with writhing sufferers and devils from it ever at her ear to whisper distraction and temptation.

Mademoiselle Narbonne, hearing a warning whistle of the *Saint François,* bethought her of her strange position, of the sisters and of Lutz. She trembled, turned pale, and begged to be excused as she started running to the beach to catch a boat about to shove off. I also bade good-by to the two, with a sigh for their fleeting felicity, and strolled to the Catholic mission.

Père Siméon was seated at a table under an umbrageous *hao* tree, writing. He was in a frayed and soiled cassock of black. His hair was white, and his beard grizzled, both long and uncut and flowing over his religious gown. His face was broad and rubicund, and his remarkable eyes—a deep, shining brown, eyes of childish faith—proclaimed him poet and artist. Aged, he had yet the strength and heartiness of middle age, and when I greeted him he rose and kissed me with warmth.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "Monsieur O'Brien, you have returned to hear more of Jeanne d'Arc, is not that so? You have been too long in Atuona. You should stay in Taiohae, and see what we have here. We go along well. Joan of Arc looks after us."

We entered the sitting-room of the mission, and were soon with a bottle of wine, and cigarettes, in a discussion of affairs.

I asked to see any recent poems he had written, and, blushingly, he handed me the paper over which he had been bending.

"There has been an excess of drinking recently," he said ruefully, as he took a sip of his mild claret. I read his stanzas aloud:

"Comment peut-on pour un moment d'ivresse,
Par le démon se laisser entrainer?
Que de regrets suivraient cette faiblesse!
Je n'ai qu'une âme et je veux la sauver.

"Oh! que je crains la perte de mon âme!
Pour la sauver je saurai tout braver,
J'ai mon refrain pour quiconque me blâme,
Je n'ai qu'une âme et je veux la sauver."

Now I have no skill in rime, but, inspired by his ready gift, I took his paper and wrote what might be called a free translation. I read it to him as follows:

Oh, how can a man for a moment's bibacity
Let the demon take hold of his soul?
Remorse is the fruit of such wicked vivacity;
Hell follows the flowing bowl.

"Oh, how I fear that I weakly may lose it,
And, to guard it, will everything brave!
I 'll tell the world that would tempt me to bruise it;
I have but one soul to save.

"Helas!" commented the priest, "I cannot understand one word of it. Doubtless it surpasses my poor lines in excellence. "I will multiply copies of this poem on my hectograph," said *Père* Siméon, "and I will distribute them where they will do most good."

"Captain Capriata will receive one?" I ventured, recalling that in the procession in honor of Joan of Arc's

anniversary the old Corsican skipper had fallen with the banner of the Maid of Orleans.

Père Siméon's face glowed with zeal.

"I will name no names," he said, "but Capriata is a good man and comes often to church now."

For months, I had desired to ask a question of *Père* Siméon, since Lutz had told me that Robert Louis Stevenson had written about him. The trader had shown me his copy of "In the South Seas," and had pointed out the error of the printer, who had made Stevenson's "Father Simeon Delmas" "Father Simeon Delwar."

"*Père* Siméon," I said, "a writer about the islands mentions you in his book. He was here a long time ago in a little yacht, the *Casco,* and he says that he went with you from Hatiheu, to a native High Place, and that you named the trees and plants for him. You had a portfolio, he said, from which you read."

The missionary stopped a moment, and plucked his beard, inquiringly.

"There have been many come here, in fifty years," he said slowly, "yachtsmen and students. I do not recall the name Stevenson."

Something pricked his recollection, and he took me into the rectory and produced his portfolio.

"Here is the list; I must have read that author," he said.

"You gave an abstract of the virtues of the trees and plants, Stevenson says in his volume."

"*Le voilá!*" replied the priest. "Stevenson? Do you mean perhaps Louis, who was a consumptive?"

He made a rapid movement of the hand to his face,

and drew upon the air a mustache and imperial, a slender figure with a slight stoop—in a word, the very shadow of the master of romance.

"He was much with Stanislao, the king's son. He was *très distingué.* He was here but a little time. However, I remember him well, because he was very *sympathique,* and a gentleman.

"I will tell you why he impressed me particularly. He was not French, but he spoke it as I do, and he was curious about the cannibalism which was then practically eradicated. There was another priest with me who was then very ill. He died in my arms. I remember the evening he told Stevenson of how he had saved the life of a foolish French governor. There had been rumors of a cannibal feast at Hatiheu, and the governor was incensed. He feared that the incident might be reported to Paris and injure his prestige. He blamed the chief, and sent him word that if it were proved he would personally blow out his brains.

"Soon word came that the Hatiheu people—I was pastor there for a quarter of a century—had killed several of their enemies, and were eating them and drinking *namu enata.* The governor started off in haste from Taiohae, for Hatiheu and the priest went with him, as also several *gendarmes.*

"Hundreds of natives were grouped in the public place, chanting, dancing, and drinking.

" 'Where is the chief?' demanded the governor.

" 'I am here,' said a voice, stern and menacing, and the chief broke from the throng and advanced toward the governor.

"The latter drew his revolver. 'You have permitted this breaking of the law, after I sent you word that I would kill you if you ate human flesh?'

"'*E!*' replied the chief in a high voice. 'I am the master in Hatiheu. Do you wish to be eaten?'

"The war-drums sounded and the grim warriors began to surround the party. My friend, who was, for safety, an adopted son of the chief, and thus taboo, seized the governor and led him to the boat. They got away by sheer courage on the priest's part. He described this to Louis, who wrote it down. I recall it clearly, because the poor martyr died the next week. Did Louis write of the Marquesas much?"

I said that he had. I should have liked to stay and gain from *Père* Siméon all I could of his memories of the poet, but a boy came running up the road to say that the *Saint François* was to leave very soon.

I embraced *Père* Siméon. He kissed me on both cheeks, and gave me his blessing. It had been worth a voyage to know him.

Jerome Capriata, the eater of cats, was outside his house. He invited me in to meet his wife, a barefooted Frenchwoman who sat in a scantily-furnished room, musing over a bottle of absinthe. I could stay only a minute, as the *Saint François* whistled insistently. His wife set out the bottle and glasses before us, and we drank the farewell *goutte*.

On the way to the beach I met Mrs. Fisher, whom Bishop Dordillon, my dictionary writer, had as adopted mother, when he was old enough to be her grandfather. That was because Queen Vaekehu had adopted him as

Photo from Underwood and Underwood

Throwing spears at a cocoanut on a stake

The raised-up atoll of Makatea

a grandson, and Mrs. Fisher as a daughter, and the bishop had observed the pseudo-relationship strictly.

"Mrs. Stevenson gave me a shawl," said Mrs. Fisher. "I have shown that to many people. Madame Jack London wore it when she was here with her husband on the *Snark*. They lived with Lutz, the German, who was then here. *Pauvre Stevenson!* He had to die young, and here I am, after all these years!"

I waded through the surf to the boat, and reached the *Saint François* to find all the others aboard. We shipped the buoy and were away in a trice. The last sight I had of the shore was of the promontory where Captain Porter raised the American flag a hundred years before. I was never to see the Marquesas Islands again. The fresh breath of nature was too foul with the worst of civilization.

CHAPTER XXIII

McHenry gets a caning—The fear of the dead—A visit to the grave of Mapuhi—En voyage.

I MAGINE my delight when the captain of the *Saint François* set our course for Takaroa, the atoll of Mapuhi, Nohea, and the crippled diver who had possessed the great pearl of Puka-puka! The Marquesas Islands are only eight hundred miles from the Society Islands, of which Tahiti is one, and between the Marquesas and the Society Islands lie the strewn eighty atolls of the *Iles Dangereuses* or Paumotu group. With steam we ran the half-thousand miles or so from Taiohae in two nights and two days, and at daybreak of the second day were due to see the familiar, lonely figure of the wrecked *County of Roxburgh* on an uninhabited *motu* of Takaroa. It was this startling sight that informed the Londons in the *Snark* that they were out of their course and in danger, and it was Takaroa the Stevensons in the *Casco* looked for, only to fetch up at Tikei, thirty miles to windward. I had no confidence in our Breton captain, to whom these waters were as unknown as the Indies to Columbus. I breathed a sigh of relief when the lofty iron masts of the dismantled vessel loomed on the horizon.

After so many months in the frowning islands of the war fleet, with their thunderous headlands, gleaming streams, and green and black valleys, the spectacle of

the slender ring of white sand and coral, the verdant banners of this first of the Low Islands lying flat upon the jeweled waters, aroused in me again sensations of wonder at the ineffable variety of creation; the myriad-mindedness of the Creator. The crash of the surf upon the outer reef, the waving of the breeze-stirred cocoanuts, the flight of a solitary bird, contrasted with the marvelous fabrication of man, the metal ship, thrown by a toss of the sea and a puff of the wind among these evidences of a beautiful yet deadly design.

The *Saint François* crept along the coast of the atoll and anchored opposite the pass, a good mile from the breakers. Everybody was on deck, the black-gowned nuns with Mademoiselle Narbonne—she also in a tunic of religious hue. Since we had left Nuku-hiva they had not appeared. The contrary currents and confused trade-winds among these Pernicious Islands had kept them in their cabin. The six-hundred-ton hull of the *Saint* had see-sawed through the two hundred leagues of the tropic of Capricorn, and only hardened trenchermen like the ship's officers and myself could find appetite for food. Lutz, too, had raised a mournful face to the deck but seldom. A few hundred sacks of copra awaited us at Takaroa, and we put off a life-boat to bring it aboard. Lutz and I accompanied the second officer with a command from the captain to stay no longer than the cargo's loading. Lying Bill's schooner, the *Morning Star,* was in the lagoon, and, seeing it there, I wondered if Mapuhi, the great sailor of these atolls, had steered it through the narrow pass. About the landing, despite the uniqueness of the steamship's arrival, was an unusual quietude, a hush that moved me

to fear, as a presage of evil. A cholera-stricken village in the Philippines had that same dismal aura. A few natives were upon the coral mole, and the *Mutoi* came forward to examine our papers.

"Let us go to the house of Mapuhi," I said to Lutz.

"Ja wohl," he replied; "I have not met him in many years."

We left the mate and walked along the path past the traders' stores. The thousand feet that trod the coral road and had gone in and out the dozen shops of the dealers and pearl-buyers during my stay on Takaroa were missing, but more than the stir and hum of the *rahui* was absent. A depressing torpor possessed the little village. Mapuhi's store was closed tightly, and from no house or hut did a head show or a greeting come.

We saw that the door of one shop was ajar, and, going in, happened on a pleasant and illuminating scene. Angry words in Tahitian we heard as we mounted the steps, and smothered exclamations of a profane sort in English which had a familiar note. Back of the counter was a very large Tahitian woman who, with a heavy fishing-rod of bamboo, was thrashing a white man. She was, between blows, telling him that if he got drunk or spoke rudely to her again, she would "treat him as a Chinaman did his horse in Tahiti," which is a synonym for roughness. He was evading the strokes of the bamboo by wriggling, and guarding with his arms, and was cursing in return, but was plainly afraid of her. He was McHenry, my ofttime companion of revels at the *Cercle Bougainville* in Papeete,

who had come on the *Flying Fish* with me from Tahiti, and had remained in Takaroa.

Many times he had boasted of his contempt for native women.

"I 've had my old lady nineteen years," he said once, "and she would n't speak to me if she met me on the streets of this town. She would n't dare to in public until I recognized her."

Lutz and I did not utter a sound, but quickly descended the steps.

"I never before saw a native wife beating her husband," he commented caustically. "That McHenry deserves it. Lying Bill often said McHenry's *vahine* took a stick to him. Tahitian women will not be whipped themselves."

Lutz should know. He had had fourteen years with a Tahitian mistress, a wife in her own eyes as much as if wedded in a cathedral. Would he not have to face her in Papeete when he should be married to Mademoiselle Narbonne? Perhaps she had a stronger weapon than a rod! The *taua's* sorcery might stretch over the ocean, and be potent in Tahiti.

Lutz and I were almost at Mapuhi's residence when we met Nohea, my host of the fishing and diving. Nohea was in a black cloth coat and a blue *pareu,* and his countenance was distressed.

"Ia ora na, Nohea!" I called to him. "Is Mapuhi a Mapuhi at home?"

"Mapuhi?" he repeated and shuddered. "Mapuhi *máte!"*

Mapuhi dead! It did not seem possible; the giant I had known so recently!

Nohea began to weep and left us. Outside the inclosure of Mapuhi's house were a dozen men, and among them Hiram Mervin, the Paumotu-American who had described to me the cyclone of Hikueru. We shook hands, and I asked of what Mapuhi had died. Surely not of disease. The reef must have beaten him at last. I could not think of that super-man yielding to a clot or a kidney. He, who had made the wind and currents his sport, who in the dark of night had sailed through foaming passes the white mariner shunned in broad daylight, who had given largesse to his people for decades, and who had made the shells and nuts of his isles pay him princely toll, despite the cunning of the white, the *papaa,* who came to take much and give little.

"He was eighty," said Hiram Mervin. "He took sick on Reitoru, that tiny island near here. He was brought here. Some one wanted to give him medicine.

" 'No,' he said, 'my time has come. I will not live by things. I die content. I have been a good Mormon since I accepted the Word. What I did before was in darkness, when I was a gentile.'

"He passed away peacefully. We lost a bulwark of the church, but he will reign with Christ."

Lutz and I did not wish to intrude upon the kin of Mapuhi, nor to remain longer within the sound of the wailing that now issued from the house at the news that I, the American, had come back on the steamship. This extemporized burst of lamentation was a special honor to me and to the decedent, an expression of a tie between us, and, though it swelled suddenly at my arrival, was not the crying of hired mourners but the lacrymation of sincere grief. In wakes among the Irish I had

found exactly the same spirit—an increase or instant renewal of the keening or shrieking when one who had been dear to the dead person appeared.

We two walked away, and encountered McHenry, who had learned of our presence. McHenry was shaken by the castigation given him by his wife, and assumed an air of brazen indecency and bluster to hide his condition.

"One bottle of booze and I 'll make 'em all quit their catabawlin' an' dance a hula," he said. "Much they care for except the bloomin' francs the ol' boy left 'em!"

McHenry exposed his own vulturous desires, and not the feelings of the tribe of Mapuhi. To them the passing of Mapuhi was as to the Jews that of their leader by Nebo's lonely mountain. The great man had expired the night before, and preparations were being made to bury him. In this climate the body hastens to rejoin the elements. The chief was not to lie in the common charnel in a grove on another *motu* of Takaroa. As suitable to his rank and wealth and his generosity to the Mormon church, he had retained for himself a piece of ground beside the temple. A coral wall inclosed the small necropolis. Within a hundred feet of the sea, in the brilliant coral sand, rugged and bare, it was fit anchoring ground for this ship among canoes. One tombstone leaned against the wall, a plain slab of marble, inscribed:

Punau Mapuhi tei pohe ite 30 *Me* 1899

Punau was the wife he had clung to under Mormonism, and who had borne him the son and daughter

I knew. Many years he had survived her, and had not married another. The religion of polygamy had made of the old barbarian an ascetic, who had been a Grand Turk under Protestantism and Catholicism, between which he had wavered according to the novelty offered.

The body of Mapuhi was laid out in the principal room of his house, the room in which I had met him and the American elders on my first landing. Nohea and others had worked through the night to build a coffin. They had used the strong planks the dead man had gathered from the deck or cabin of the *County of Roxburgh,* and had polished them with cocoanut-oil, so that they shone. The coffin was lined with the sleeping-mat of Mapuhi, and in it he reposed, dressed in his churchly clothes, a black frock coat, white trousers, and a stiff white shirt. No collar cumbered his neck, nor were shoes upon the ample feet that had walked on the floor of the sea. Most of the people of Takaroa took a last look at him, but some did not, for fear. I gazed a few minutes at his face. More than in life, the likeness to a mutilated Greek statue struck me; perhaps the head of a Goth seen in the Vatican Gallery. Strength, repose, and mystery were in the powerful mold of it, the broad, low forehead, the rounded chin, and wide-open eyes. I had seen many so-called important men in death, when as a reporter I wrote obsequies at a penny a line. This Paumotuan chief's corpse had more majesty and peace than any of them—a nearer relation to my conception of an old and wise child of the eternal unity, glad to be freed from the illusion of life.

In the village, the huts were still closed. No fisherman put off in a canoe, and none sat making or mending nets. McHenry and I paddled out to the *Morning Star*. The skipper was on deck with Ducat, the mate. Some native had hurried to them with the amusing gossip of McHenry's *vahine* beating him, and he had to bear a storm of ridicule. Lying Bill rehearsed his boasts about her inferiority, and Ducat, who had humiliated him before me long ago, taunted him with his submission to her.

"I did n't want to kill her," was all McHenry could retort. McHenry had a story of Chocolat which was distracting. Captain Moét of the *Flying Fish* had come into Takaroa a month or two before with Chocolat, a fair-sized dog. The tricks Chocolat did when I was on Moét's schooner were incomparable with his later education.

"The bloomin' pup would stand on his hind legs and dance to a tune Moét whistled," said McHenry. "He could count up to five with cards, and could pick all the aces out of a piquet pack. He would let Moét throw him overboard in port, and catch a rope's end with his teeth and hold on while he was pulled up. He was a reg'lar circus performer. You know Moét and I ain't very close. He done me a dirty turn once. I knew if I could ever get Chocolat to Papeete, an' on the steamer from San Francisco, I could sell him to a bloody American tourist for a thousand francs. Moét watched me like a gull does the cook when he empties his pail overside. Now, you know me; I ain't nobody to say to you can't do this or that. I laid for that pup, and, when I went aboard the schooner just before she

sailed, I took a little opium I got from the Chink pearl-buyer here; and I put a pill of it in a piece of fresh pork, and took it aboard in my pocket. Just before I was goin' into my boat, after a drink or two with Jean, I 'd been watchin' Chocolat stretched out nappin' on the deck. I put the meat alongside of his mouth, and he ate it like a shark does a chunk o' salt horse. Soon I saw he was knocked out, an' I asked Moét to go down into the trade-room an' get me a piece o' tobacco. He 'd no sooner ducked than I grabbed the bloody pup by the scruff an' stuffed him into my trousers' front. He was like dead. I was in the boat in a second with no one seein' him, and reached up to get the tobacco from Moet's hand.

"Of course the purp never let out a bloomin' whimper, an' I got away and to shore with no proof that I had snared the bow-wow. Moet had trained Chocolat to let out a hell of a yell if any one as much as took him toward the rail, and so he would have to think that the cur had fallen overboard on his own hook. I took him to my store unbeknown to any one, and tied him to a chair. He never come to for three hours, an' was sluggery for a day or two. I was waitin' for Moét to sail, but the next day he comes ashore an' makes a bee-line for my joint. I saw his boat puttin' off, an' I give Chocolat to my Penrhyn boy who tied him in a canoe, an' hiked out in the lagoon with him. Moét looks me up an' down, curses his *sacres* an' his Spanish *diablos* an' *Sus Marias,* an' crawled through my place from top to bottom, shoutin', 'Chocolat! Chocolat! *Pettee sheen!*' an' half cryin'. He had to trip his anchor the next day, and I had the *sheen* all right.

"I was goin' to smuggle him on board Lyin' Bill's cockroach tub an' to Papeete, when one day I come back from Mapuhi's and found him gone, an' his string chewed through. He had skinned out, an', though I asked everybody on this island about him, everybody knew nothin'. After three days I give the beast up. I know the Kanaka, an' I knew that no fat little dogs are let run loose very long. About two weeks later, I went to another *motu* to buy some copra, an' the first native I run into was wearin' Chocolat's collar on his arm. He was a Mormon churchman, too, but he swore he found the collar in a canoe."

Poor little brown Chocolat! He had entertained me often on the *Flying Fish* with his antics, and Jean Moét had such dreams of his future! A kindly fate may have bestowed on him the favor of a quick death by hotpotting rather than the ignominy of circus one-night stands or the pampered kennel of a millionaire. He had had his year at sea, and died in the full flush of doghood.

The news that Lutz was a passenger on the *Saint François* with Mademoiselle Narbonne brought a prolonged whistle from Ducat, and an exclamation from Lying Bill:

"Well, 'e 'll bloody well get 'is! Maná won't take a club to 'im because the 'usban' does the beatin' when 'e 's a Dutchman, but she 's not lettin' 'im walk over 'er so easy. I 'ad a long palaver with 'er on the voyage up. She says everybody in Taaoa knows Barbe is a leper, an' she 's preparin' to 'ave the bleedin' Frog doctors cage 'er up out there by Papenoo, if she goes to Tahiti."

"I never heard before that she had leprosy," said Ducat. "I think that Maná is spreading that report to scare Lutz."

"I feel sure that it has not reached him," I said. "Nobody in Atuoṇa would mention it to him."

Abruptly there occurred to me the cryptic assertion of Peyral at my first sight of Barbe in the mission church.

"I would n't be her with all her money," he had said. "Me, I value my skin."

That was weeks or months before Lemoal had come to me, or I had known of the *taua,* or of Lutz's courtship. If there had been a plot against her happiness, it must have been laid early, or what did Peyral mean?

McHenry broke in on my train of reasoning.

"I 'll see that the German sausage learns about it damn soon," he said spitefully. "He 's doin' too good a business in both copra an' women."

The whistle of the *Saint François* blew the recall of boats and crew.

"Why don't you stay, an' go to Papeet' with me," asked Captain Pincher. "We 'll 'ead out in a day or two when the wind is right. You 're in no 'urry. You want to see 'em lay ol' Mapuhi in the grave."

I agreed, and paddled to shore with McHenry. Natives were taking the last load of copra out to the steamship, and I rode on the bags with McHenry. On the deck of the *Saint François* I passed Barbe and the nuns on my way below to get my trifling belongings. McHenry stayed above, and, when I had bidden goodby to the captain and the first officer, I sought the three women, with my canvas bag in hand. The sisters were

my friends, and I shook their hands. I was about to say *au revoir* to Barbe when she walked with me a few yards to the gangway. I explained my intention not to continue on the steamship.

"What shall I do?" she implored, as she squeezed my hand nervously. "I am afraid of everything—"

The whistle sounded again.

Lutz, who was talking with McHenry, approached me, and drew from me my reason for carrying my assets with me. I thought he appeared relieved at my leaving, and that his hopes to see me in Papeete were shammed. In the boat I glanced up to see Mademoiselle Narbonne leaning over the rail, her black cloud of hair framing her pale face with its look of sadness and perplexity, and her eyes still demanding of me the answer to her question.

"I bloody well put a roach in Lutz's ear," said McHenry, as we rowed back.

That he had even mentioned Barbe's name I did not believe. Lutz would have taken him by the throat, and thrown him overboard. On the strand at the atoll again, I saw the smoke streaming from the steamship's funnel as she set out for Papeete; and I sent an unspoken message of good will to the groping ill-matched pair whom I could not call lovers, and yet both of whom were searching for the satisfaction of heart and ambition I too sought.

Mapuhi was interred that afternoon an hour before sunset. In these atolls where there is no soil, and where water lies close under the coral surface, even burial is difficult. Cyclones as in Hikueru have torn the coral coverings off the graves, and swept the coffins, corpses,

and bones into the lagoon and the maws of the sharks and the voracious barracuda. For Mapuhi a marble cenotaph would be ordered in Tahiti, and cover him when made in a few weeks.

Nohea and two elders dug the grave. About four feet deep, it was wide enough to rest the huge body in the glistening coffin. This was borne on the shoulders of six young men, nephews of Mapuhi, and in the cortège were all of the Takaroans of age. Solemnly and silently they marched down the road. All who owned black garments wore them, and others were in white trousers, some with and others without shirts, but all treading ceremoniously with bowed heads and serious faces. Nohea was the leader, carrying the large Book of Mormon from the temple, and at the grave he read from it verses about the resurrection, the near approach of the coming of Christ, and Mapuhi's being quiet in the grave until the trumpet rang for the assembling of the just, the unjust on opposite sides for judgment.

"Mapuhi a Mapuhi will sit very close to Brigham Young in the judgment and afterward will be among the great on earth when the rejected are cast into the terrible pit of fire, and the elect live in plenty and happiness here."

The heavy ivory sand rattled on the wood, and the remains of Mapuhi, last link between the healthy savagery and the present semi-civilization of the Paumotuan race, were one with the mysterious beach he had so long dwelt upon. He had been born before the white man ruled it, and his life had spanned the rise of the imperial industrialism which had destroyed the Polynesian.

After the funeral I took my bag to the hut of Nohea,

to live the few days until the *Morning Star* left for Papeete. Our frugal meal was soon eaten, and the old diver and I sat outside his door in the cool of the sunset glow. We talked of Mapuhi.

"We had the same father but different mothers," said Nohea. "Mapuhi was twenty years older than I. For many years he was as my father to me."

"Where is Mapuhi now?" I asked, to discover his beliefs about the soul. Nohea trembled, and looked about him.

"Is he not in the hole in the coral?" he said, with alarm.

"Oh, yes, Nohea," I replied, "the body of Mapuhi is in the coral, but where is that part that knew how to dive, to steer the schooner, to grow rich, and to pray? Where is that *varua* or spirit which loved you?"

Nohea responded quickly: "That is with the gods, with Adam, Christ, Joseph Smith, and Brigham Young. Mapuhi is with them making souls for the bodies of Mormon babies on earth. When Israel gathers by and by, I will see him again, for we will all live in America and be happy."

"But Nohea," I protested, "you will not be happy away from Takaroa. Your canoe and your fishing-nets and spears will be left behind.

Nohea was confused, but his faith was strong.

"The elders have explained that in America, where all the saved people shall live after the judgment, we shall have everything we want. The fish will jump on the hook, the canoe will paddle itself, and the cocoanuts will be always ready for eating or cool for drinking."

I tried to draw our conversation around to Mapuhi

again, but Nohea, as the darkness grew thicker, busied himself in making a fire of cocoanut husks and leaves, and evaded any reference to the dead.

Only after the moon began to come up, he said, "I must now go to keep watch at the grave of Mapuhi. It is my duty, and I must go."

He brought from his hut a crazy-quilt, and wrapped it about him, and with extreme hesitancy walked away through the obscurity to carry out the obligation of friendship.

Hardly can we guess at the horror he had to overcome to do this. The remnant of fear of the dead that our slight inheritance of ancestral delusions causes to linger in some of us is the merest shadow of the all-pervading terror that weakens the Paumotuan at thought of the ghost of the defunct which stays near the corpse to threaten and perhaps to seize and eat the living. Associated, maybe, with the former cannibalism, when the living consumed the dead, Nohea, though earnest Mormon, believed that the *tupapau* hovered over the grave or in the tree-tops, to accomplish this ghastly purpose. Had Punau, the widow of Mapuhi, been living, she would have had to spend her nights for several weeks by his sepulcher. Being a chief, there were many to perform this devoir, and before I entered the hut to sleep I saw several small fires burning about the spot where the watchers cowered and whispered through the night. Of the dangers of this office of friendship or widowhood, every atoll in the Paumotus had a hundred tales, and Tahiti and the Marquesas more. In Tahiti, the *tupapau,* the disembodied and malign ego of the dead, entered the room where the remains were laid out.

Photo by Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

Paumotuans on a heap of brain coral

Photo by Dr. Theodore P. Cleveland

Did these two eat Chocolat?

Photo from Brown Bros.

The stonehenge men in the South Seas

A frightening noise was heard in the room or in that part of the house, followed by sounds and movements of a struggle, and in the morning gouts of blood were on the walls. In Moorea, near Tahiti, I met an educated Englishman, there twenty-five years, who said that on analysis the blood proved to be human. A cynic in most things, he would not deny that he believed the circumstance supernatural.

The *tupapau* had many manifestations: knocks at doors and on thatched roofs, cries of sorrow and of hate. White it was in the night, and often hovering over the house or the grave. It might be that the Ghost Bird, the *burong-hantu,* a reality which is white, and whose wings make little or no noise when flying, was the foundation of this phantom.

In the meanwhile the schooner *Morning Star* had gone to Tikei for cargo. Lying Bill was to anchor off the pass of Takaroa in a few days on his voyage to Tahiti and to send ashore a boat for me. For nine nights the vigil was kept by the grave of Mapuhi. About four o'clock each morning the ward by the grave was abandoned, and Nohea threw himself wearily on his mat near me. Only one time, on the last evening, I questioned him about the *tupapau,* and then realized my discourtesy; it was for him to initiate this subject.

"Have you heard or seen anything *rima atua nia-natura?* Anything by the hand of the spirit?"

Nohea wrapped himself more tightly in his quilt, and his answer came from under it:

"This morning I heard a scratching. This is our last night, thank the gods. I think it was the *tupapau* saying farewell. We never look at the grave."

About two the next morning Nohea shook me.

"The *Fetia Taiao* is off the passage," he said.

He had heard in the still air the faint slap of her canvas as she jibed, I thought, but that could not have been, as she was too far away. His awareness was not of the ear or eyes, but something different—the keenness of the conscious and unconscious, which had preserved the Paumotuan race in an environment which had meant starvation and death to any other people.

I had my possessions already on the schooner, and, forbidding Nohea to wait with me at the mole, I embraced him and left him. A wish to look at the grave took hold of me, and I walked along the path to it. The sun, though below the horizon, was lessening the sombrous color of the small hours, and I could discern vaguely the outline of the walled burial-ground. The splash of oars in the water and the rattle of rowlocks warned me of the approach of the boat for me, but I still had five minutes.

I sat down on the wall at the farthest end away from the grave. Soon I would be in my own country, among the commonplace scenes of cities and countryside. I would resume the habits and conventions of my nation, and enter into the struggle for survival and for repute. Those goals shrunk in importance on this strip of coral. Never would I be able to express in myself the joy and heat of life, and the conquest of nature at its zenith of mystery, as had the man whose tenement of clay was so near. Love had been his animating emotion. In all the welter of low passions, of conflicting religions, and commercial standards imported to his island by the whites, he had remained a son of the atoll, brother and

father of his tribe, disdainful of the inventions and luxuries offered him for his wealth, but shaping his course adroitly for his race's happiness.

Deep in this strain of reflection, I was recalled to actuality by a grating sound, a queer crunching and creaking. It came from about the tomb, and was like a hundred rats dragging objects on a stone floor—slithering discordant, offensive. If I could have fainted it would have been relief, for I was seized with mortal terror. I could not reason. The boat from the schooner was nearing fast, and would be at the mole in a minute or two. I must go, but I could not move. Then suddenly a bar of light flung up from the sea, the first of the dawn, and by its feeble glimmer I saw a swarm of creatures about the barrow. They were the robber-crabs who had come out from the groves, and they were pulling the pieces of coral off the burial heap, and digging to pierce the coffin. Scores of the grisly vampires were working with their huge claws at the pile, and, as they rushed to and fro on their tall, obscene legs, they were the very like of ghouls in animal form. This was the "scratching" Nohea had heard when with their back to the grave he and his fellow-watchers dared not turn to see them.

I should have thrown rocks at the foul monsters, have scattered them with kicks and curses, but my deliverance from the supernatural was so comforting I could only burst into nervous laughter and run down the road to the mole. I leaped into the boat, and gave the order to shove off. In half an hour I was aboard the *Morning Star* and our sails spread for Tahiti and California.

AFTERWARD

A Letter from Exploding Eggs

Atuona, Hiva-Oa, Aperiri, 1922.

O Nakohu.

O au Kaoha tuuhoa Koakoau itave tekao ipatumai to Brunnec; Na Brunnec paki mai iau, tuu onotia Kaoha oko au iave; Atahi au ame tao ave oe itiki iau Aua oto maimai omua ahee taua I Menike ua ite au Ta Panama ohia umetao au ua hokotia au eoe Ite aoe.

Mea meitai ote mahina ehee mai oe I Tahiti ahaka ite mai oe iau Eavei tau I Tahiti etahi Otaua fiti tia mai mei Tahiti Ta maimai oe eavei tau I Tahiti Patu mai oe itatahi hamani nau naete inoa Brunnec.

Eahaa iapati mai oe ukoana iau totaua pae ua pao tuu tekao iave Kaoha oe iti haa metaino iau tihe ite nei mouehua Upeau oe iau eiva ehua ua Vei hakaua taua oia tau ete taiene ohua iva ehua.

Kaoha nui I Obriand.

From Exploding Eggs

Atuona, Hiva-Oa, April, 1922.

It is I, Nakohu, always, my dear master. I have been very glad to receive news of you by Le Brunnec, and I have seen that you have not forgotten me.

It has given me much sorrow that I did not go with you. I should have seen Panama and many things, but I was afraid that you would grow tired of me and sell me to other Americans.

If it is true that you will return here, write to me in advance by Le Brunnec, and I will go to get you in Papeete. For your stay in Atuona, fear nothing. I have now a nice house of my own on the edge of the river. There you will live and it will be my wife who will do the cooking and I will go to get the food for all of us; that will be much better than before.

I am very happy that you have not forgotten me in so long. It is true that you had told me that you would come back before nine years. I shall wait always.

Love to you, Obriand.

Letter from Malicious Gossip

Atuona, Hiva-Oa, Iunio, 1915.

E tuu ona hoa:

U Koana i au taoe hama ni, koakoa oko au i te ite i ta oe tau te kao. A oe e koe te peau o Mohotu Vehine hae, i te a te tekao, mimi, pake, namu, Tahiatini, aoe i koe toia, ate, totahi teoko, tohutohui toia hee, mehe ihepe Purutia i tihe mai nei io matou. Titihuti, na mate ite hitoto. Te moi a Kake ua mate ite hitoto, i tepo na mate, titahi, popoui ua mate, tatahi, popoui ua mate, titahi, popoui ua mate, te moupuna o Titihuti. U fanau au i te tama e moi o (Elizabethe Taavaupoo) toia inoa pahoe kanahau tautau oko, aoe e hoa e koe to mana metao ia oe, ua inu matou i te kava kona oko Bronec, kona oko Tahiapii, kona oko au, ia tihe to matou metao ia oe, ua too matou i te pora Kava à la santé te Freterick. Ena ua tuu atu nei i te ata na oe, upeau au ia ia Lemoine a tuu mai te ata na Freterick. Mea nui tau roti i tenei u fafati au e ua, roti ua tuu i una ou, mea Kaoha ia oe, me ta oe vehine. Kaoha atu nei A poro me Puhei ia oe, Kaoha atu nei Moetai kamuta ia oe. Kaoha atu nei Nakohu.

Kaoha atu nei Timoia oe, Kaoha nui Kaoha nui Ua pao tete kao.

Apae, umoi e koe tooe metao ia matou.

Nau na tooe hoa.

Tavahi.

Atuona, Hiva-Oa, June, 1915.

Ah my dear friend:

I have received your letter. I was very happy to have news of you.

Ghost Girl has not forgotten and still says, "Dance, tobacco, rum."

Many Daughters is not over her sickness; she is worse; when she walks she rolls like the Prussian ship that came here.

Titihuti died of dysentery. The little daughter of Kaké died of dysentery. The one died in the evening, Titihuti; in the morning the little girl of Titihuti died. I have given birth to a little daughter; her name is Elizabeth Taavaupoo, a pretty little girl, healthy and plump.

We have not stopped thinking of you, dear friend. We drank kava. Happy was Le Brunnec, happy was Tahiapii (sister of Tavati, the little woman in blue). I too was happy. Our thoughts went out to you.

We took the bowl of kava and drank to the health of Frederick. Here I send you as a present my picture. I told Le Moine to take my photograph for you.

I have many roses now; I took two of them which I put on my head as a souvenir for you and your lady. In this letter you have the love of Aporo and Puhei, of Moetai, the carpenter, and of Nakohu and of Timoteo.

Great love to you; great love to you.

I have finished speaking; farewell, and may you not forget us in your thoughts.

I, your friend,

Malicious Gossip.

Letter from Mouth of God

E tuu ona hoa:

E patu atu nei au i tenei hamani ia oe me tou Kaoha nui. Mea meitai matou paotu. E tiai nei au i taoe hamani, me te Kakano pua, me te mana roti, u haa mei —tai au i titahi keke fenua kei oko, mea tanu roti. Eia titahi mea aoe au e kokoa koe nui oe i kokoa koe nui oe i kaoha mai ian Koakoa oko nui matou i taoe hamani A patu oe i titahi hamani i tooe hoa, o Vai Etienn ena ioto ote Ami Koakoa, Apatu oe ia Vehine hae ena i tohe ahi, o te haraiipe.

E na Tahiatini i Tarani me L'Hermier, Mea meitai a fiti mai oe i Atuona nei Kanahau oko to matou fenua me he fenua Farani meitaioko tu uapu O Hinatini ena ioto ote papu meitai Kaoha atu nei tooe hoa Timo ia oe, u tuhaa ia mei a oe, e aha a, ave oe i tuhaa meia ia.

E metao anatu ia ia oe. Kaoha atu nei Kivi ia oe, E hee anatu i te ika hake Ua pao te tekao kaoha nui.

Tavahi T, Mm. Timotheo.

Ah my dear friend:

I write you this letter to send you my good wishes. We are all well. I have awaited in vain a letter from you with the flower seeds you promised me. I have inherited a very large piece of land where I could plant roses.

We have been very sorry that you have not given us more of your news. We have missed you much.

If you wish to write to your friend Vai Etienne, he is in heaven far away.

As for Ghost Girl, she must have fallen into hell.

Many Daughters' soul must have rejoined l'Hermier in France.

You would do well to return to Atuona. Our land is very beautiful—our roads like those in France.

Vanquished Often is dead, but she must be in paradise.

Your friend, Timoteo, sends you greeting. If you have forgotten him, he has not forgotten you. Come back and we will again drink the kava together.

Kivi tells me that he still thinks of you and that he still goes fishing.

It is finished.

Kaoha nui, MOUTH OF GOD.

LETTER FROM LE BRUNNEC TO FREDERICK O'BRIEN AT SAUSALITO, CALIFORNIA.

(Translation.)

Atuona, Hiva-Oa, June, 1922.

Cher ami:

You ask me what has become of Barbe Narbonne, of the valley of Taaoa. I will tell you briefly, and probably some of what I shall say you already know. She was married to Wilhelm Lutz, the Tahauku trader, in Tahiti, and all went well. Her mother was at the wedding, but not Maná, his long-time companion in Taiohae and Atuona. The married pair occupied the upper floor of the German firm's big store. There was much gaiety among the Germans and her Tahitian friends. For the first time Barbe rode in an automobile, saw a moving picture, heard a band of music, and attended prize-fights. They were married at the first of July, and on the fourteenth was celebrated the Fall of the Bastille, with tremendous hulas, much champagne, and speeches by the governor, and even by the friendly Germans, such as Monsieur Lutz.

Hélas! The *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau,* the kaiser's cruisers, came here to Atuona, robbed my store, took Jensen, the Dane, and steamed to Tahiti. When the authorities there saw them, they must fire a pop-gun at them, and provoke in turn a rain of six-inch shells. A Chinese was killed, every one ran to the woods, and many stores were set on fire and burned.

When the cruisers were gone, Monsieur Lutz and all

the Germans were imprisoned on Motu-Uta, the beautiful little islet a thousand feet from Lovaina's Annexe Hotel. Madame Lutz was reproached by the church, the government, and by every one not in prison, for marrying the "animal" Lutz, and immediately they began to give her a divorce on that very ground—that the husband was a German, and therefore not a human being, but an animal. It did not take long, and again she was Mademoiselle Narbonne.

Now she was free, rich, and in civilization. She danced and sang and was dressed in your American clothes, for no ships came from France. But, as in Atuona, rumors began that she was leprous. That did not matter much to the Tahitians who, if they like one, care nothing for what one has, but the whites ceased to be in her company. They did not say aloud what they thought, but only that she had loved a German.

Maná went every day of good weather in a little canoe about the islet of Motu-Uta, at a certain distance prescribed by the guards, and made a gesture to Monsieur Lutz, who sat or stood within an enclosure and looked out to sea. Poor Lutz! He died of an aneurism, or, if you will, of a broken Prussian heart.

Mademoiselle Narbonne one day went toward Papenoo. At Faaripoo she saw the inclosure of the leprosarium, where the three or four score lepers are confined. She returned to the Marquesas Islands.

Pauvre fille! Personne n'a voulu se marier avec elle et elle vit avec un vieux Canaque de Taaoa. Elle est retournée à la brousse—Poor girl! Nobody wants to marry her and she lives with an old Kanaka of Taaoa. She has returned to the jungle.

I will tell you, my friend, that no matter what Lemoal has said, or her own fears, Mademoiselle Narbonne is not a leper. But the sorcery of the *taua* has ended her. These Marquesans, even if half white, are yet heathen.

Daughter of the Pigeon is dead of tuberculosis. Ghost Girl died of influenza in Tahiti, where she had gone to continue her joyous life. Peyral and his white daughters have fled to France. Exploding Eggs has taken the daughter of Titihuti; and her husband, from whom he seized her, is content to live with them. Governor L'Hermier des Plantes is governor of the Congo. Song of the Nightingale is in prison for making cocoanut rum. Seventh Man Who Is So Angry has lost his wife of tuberculosis. Vanquished Often died of leprosy in childbirth. Le Moine, the artist, went mad and is dead. Grelet, the Swiss, is dead. *Père* David, *Père* Simeon, *Père* Victorin, are well, as all the nuns. Jimmy Kekela is well; his sister is shut up in a leper hospital. McHenry has been expelled from Tahiti for selling alcoholic liquors to the natives of the Paumotus. Lemoal is dead. Hemeury François and Scallamera are dead. Vai Etienne, son of Titihuti, is dead. *Commissaire* Bauda went to the wars.

I have named my second child after you, Frederick. You remember her mother, At Peace, the sister of Malicious Gossip. We dwell in comfort and happiness. Return to live with us.

Votre dévoué

LE BRUNNEC.